

AMERICAN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION, TEXAS SCHOOLS,
AND HOME ECONOMICS, 1910-1957

A Thesis

by

DELILAH BESA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2010

Major Subject: History

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ABSTRACT

American Progressive Education, Texas Schools,
and Home Economics, 1910-1957. (May 2010)

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Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Julia K. Blackwelder

This thesis explores the Americanization efforts of educational leaders in Texas during the Progressive Era to demonstrate that reformers did not use vocational education, and specifically home economics, primarily to Americanize immigrant and ethnic minority students to become good, working-poor citizens. Through Americanization efforts in vocational curricula, reformers hoped to provide economically disadvantaged students with a practical body of knowledge and democratic values that would create healthy, economically viable communities occupied by loyal, educated American citizens. Federal legislation that promoted the development of vocational education in the first half of the twentieth century demonstrates that this way of thinking reflected national rather than regional trends. In Texas, vocational education was largely directed at a population that was predominately white and rural for the first several decades of the twentieth century. That decision by educators casts considerable doubt on assertions that they were primarily motivated by racialized thinking. Notably, home economics curricula was constructed over the framework of Americanization, and children who took such courses in rural schools received training that advocated respect

for others, cooperation, an appreciation of Western culture and the value of aesthetics, efficiency and thriftiness, and good hygiene practices. The homemaking program at the South San Antonio high school in the 1944-1945 school year provides an example. Homemaking teacher Nell Kruger's curriculum reached far beyond training future housewives, waitresses and maids. She sought, in accordance with the state-mandated home economics curriculum, to provide a practical body of knowledge and to inculcate democratic values in her students. Using Texas' State Department of Education and State Board of Vocational Education bulletins, Texas Education Agency literature, federal and state laws, conference reports, and curriculum guidelines, this thesis seeks to further nuance the understanding of Americanization efforts through vocational education, specifically homemaking, during the Progressive Era in Texas by arguing that Americanization reflected an urban, middle-class perspective directed toward economically disadvantaged white students as well as immigrant and ethnic minority students.

DEDICATION

There she sat arched over, in all her glory, a bundle of love, warmth, independence, creativity, intelligence, and beauty. Before her eyes failed her, before her hands grew stiff with arthritis, her youth produced miracles, bringing to life the creations of her mind. The flow of her bare foot moving up and down, hour after hour, day after day, year after year orchestrated the music of my childhood, the steady, comforting sound of a sewing machine. The sweet smell of her sweat that filled the air on a hot summer day created the fragrance of a life that now only exists in the dusty attic of my memory. Long after my Mom departs from this road stop we call life I will continue to remember this image of her. Always. Forever. I dedicate this thesis to her, my favorite home economics teacher.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Dedication and Acknowledgements of this thesis are the only sections that include words in my language and not academia's language. Hopefully, I can convey my appreciation for those who contributed to my success, as well as explain my perspective that informed, what some consider, a controversial argument. All in 4 pgs.

Growing up in a shack on Ella St. in Kingsville, Texas I adored Carol Burnett and watched her show religiously. My favorite part came at the end when the animated cartoon version of her, dressed as a cleaning woman, appeared on the bottom left of the screen. She mopped until she noticed the credits running behind her and then stopped to watch them for a moment. Disinterested, she returned to mopping but not before she took care of a personal itch. It tickled me to see a cleaning lady take care of a personal itch while "important fancy" people received credit for their contributions to humanity. And not that Carol Burnett didn't appreciate the people who worked on the show; she seemed to simply poke fun at the silly ritual of creating important fanciness. The fact that Carol Burnett played the cleaning lady did not go unnoticed by me. She worked, and worked hard for her show. Nothing was beneath her, not even mopping floors.

My favorite people became those who valued hard work, didn't believe it was beneath them, realized there are times when you have to do something seemingly unimportant and unfancy in order to reach a goal, and managed to see the beauty of life even in the "worst" conditions. The fantasy of being able to do what you want to do every moment of your life is a luxury reserved for those spoiled with an abundance of

resources. Such a luxury isn't free however, it cripples the imagination. Sometimes a little suffering and sacrificing is what makes life beautiful. This understanding became a crucial aspect of my world view not only because of Carol Burnett but also because I come from a long background of hard working women, many who were either homemakers or homemaking teachers, but all hard workers.

Of course, that sounds very American Dreamish, if you work hard you can accomplish anything you want, blah, blah, blah. But I do love hard work and I do believe that when the stars align and you fall upon enough opportunity and plenty of serendipitous luck, hard work certainly doesn't hurt. Unfortunately for me, some in academia scoff at the audacity of so openly being the "white man's puppet," so to speak, and believing such a thing. Many believe racism, sexism, classism and all the other isms make it impossible for anyone other than white men to experience a good life. Personally, I think, "How unimaginative."

My journey to academia included hardships familiar to most people with a beating heart, a lot of hard work, and just as much opportunity and random luck. What attracted me to academia was the delusion that there existed a place in the world where you could be and say and write and think and feel anything you wanted. Needless to say, I felt betrayed when the façade of academia crumbled at my feet and what remained looked nothing like what the commercial promised. Turns out, you can't be and say and write and think and feel anything you want, there are rules and boundaries and trends and consequences, just like everything else in the world. In any other situation or institution this wouldn't necessarily come as a shock but academia welcomes you in with

a warm, fuzzy all-cultures-are-beautiful-everything-is-equal-and-anything-goes hug. The passive aggressive nature of it all is annoying at best and cruel at worst. Of course, no one talks about this, you have to figure it out the hard way that academia is no different than say, religion or science, with their dogma and blinders. Fair enough. But I am going to pretend for a moment that academia does live what they preach, that all cultures are beautiful, everything is equal and anything goes. And since I spent half of my childhood in The Valley, I am going to embrace my Border culture, which values speaking your mind and defending yourself. I think outsiders call this confrontation.

My thesis has holes, big giant ones. Holes that wake me up in the middle of the night, statements that expose an ignorance I already recognize and ideas so unoriginal and so over used. But what I am proud of is that when I read the primary documents I found information that contradicted assumptions academia taught me as “truths” and instead of ignoring it, I faced it and wrote about it - and I’ll never be ashamed or embarrassed of challenging my own assumptions.

But here’s what I learned when I finished writing it. If you are an ethnic, poor, female historian you have to say white people are racist, if you don’t you are politically incorrect and a sell out to your people. While all cultures are beautiful, the prized culture is the educated WASP culture and people’s existences are measured against this standard. Not all education is equal; the only education that matters is college preparatory and higher education. The worst way you can spend your life is working hard in manual labor. I have been told that my argument is reminiscent of Richard

Hofstadter circa 1960s racist and that I am possibly a neo-conservative. You can imagine the disappointment I am to fellow ethnic scholars.

I want to make it clear that my perspective is not informed by either white or ethnic men's experiences, it is informed by the experiences of my life - a hard working, poor ethnic woman. So if there are those who have yet to train their eye to see beauty and value in hard work, suffering and discrimination – well, then maybe it's because they never lived it, or maybe they did, who knows. Understandably, this may offend some or all of the three people who read it because no one likes to be told they may not get "it" or they have a false consciousness. I hate that, too. Turns out, I can't escape the contradictions I embody either. Some may even wonder why I remain in academia with the huge chip missing from my shoulder. I remain here because there is beauty in everything and I love to be and say and write and think and feel history, so I stay. And I am happy here. But I don't pretend everyone in the world wants the life of an academic and so I hope I never write history that way. Last, I reserve the right to change my mind about any assumptions I have about academia. I'm only 31 & I've only written a thesis.

I could never thank my mom, Maria T. Besa, and my dad, Raul Besa Jr., and my sister, Janina Besa Siebert (& Alec), enough. Or all our dogs, especially my baby boy Zeusy Besa, who has heard more of this thesis than anyone in the world. I thank all of my friends and every professor I had, they all shaped my perspective. I thank Fiesta Patrias, TAMU Women's and Gender Studies Program, Melbern G. Glasscock Center, Ron Stone Foundation, and AAUW for their generous support. Finally, I thank Matthew Jerrod Keyworth for sharing his mind, heart, family, life and dog, Zendi, with me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Mexican girls need a great deal of training in serving and table etiquette,
as being a waitress may be their method of obtaining a livelihood.”¹

-Pearl Idelia Ellis

Americanization through Homemaking

In 1929 home economist and Progressive reformer Pearl Idelia Ellis wrote a curriculum book promoting homemaking as a means for Americanizing high-school-aged Mexican girls.² Ellis believed that assimilation to the American lifestyle should begin at home, with wives and mothers. She wanted to provide Mexican girls with the

This thesis follows the format and style of the *Southwest Historical Quarterly*.

¹ Pearl Ellis, *Americanization Through Home Economics* (Los Angeles: Wetzel Publishing Co., 1929), 35.

² From this point forward I will use the term “Mexican” to refer to both Mexican immigrant and Mexican American students. Additionally, I decided to use the terms “African Americans” over the term “blacks,” and “whites” over the terms “white, native born” and “Anglo Americans.” The terms “domestic science,” “domestic arts,” “home economics,” and “homemaking” are interchangeable in this essay. “Home economists” refer to persons with advanced degrees in the home economics discipline. “Home economics teachers” or “homemaking teachers” refer to individuals who teach home economics or homemaking subjects at the elementary, junior high and high school levels and do not have advanced degrees in the home economics discipline. Last, I chose to use an adaptation of Eileen H. Tamura’s definition of Americanization, “the organized effort during and following World War I to compel immigrants and their children to adopt certain Anglo-American ways while remaining at the bottom socioeconomic strata of American society,” quoted from *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 52. Instead, I define Americanization as the organized effort during the Progressive Era to compel immigrants and citizens to adopt certain American, democratic ways (democratic values) in an effort to improve their standard of living and the welfare of the nation. Through Americanization, educational leaders hoped to teach respectful, democratic behavior with an understanding of civic, communal duty; a proper understanding of the English language; an appreciation of high culture and the value of aesthetics; efficiency and thriftiness; and the value of good hygiene practices.

social skills home economists perceived as necessary to live a comfortable, healthy, democratic life and avoid the abject poverty common to recent immigrants and ethnic minorities. Many historians who study the education of Mexican students in the Southwest refuse to acknowledge home economics curricula as a legitimate vehicle for improving standards of living or, in some cases, for social mobility. Instead, these scholars, whose works are discussed later in this essay, quote statements like the one above to “demonstrate” home economists’ presumed elitist and racist attitudes toward Mexican culture, ignoring any positive outcomes resulting from home economics curricula. These histories perpetuate a distorted understanding of the goals home economists hoped to achieve through high school homemaking curricula during the Progressive Era as well as the important implications of these goals.

Social crusaders hoped to cure societal ills at the turn of the twentieth century. Progressive reformers worried about the social ramifications – poverty, insufficient sanitation, low moral standards and poor education – of industrialization and uncontrolled capitalism. They sought to offset these social “evils” by creating democratic, American citizens, primarily through religious and educational endeavors. Following Reconstruction, Booker T. Washington popularized vocational education as a means of social mobility for newly freed African Americans. Philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey promoted hands-on learning or “experimental education,” which complimented Washington’s practical training in vocational education. Influenced by rising interest in character training, Dewey also advocated the use of schools as “citizen factories.” Furthermore, vocational education was modernized

with the introduction of scientific methods and theories of efficiency. Thus, many Progressive reformers, borrowing from Washington, Dewey and others, favored vocational education as a means to provide economically disadvantaged people with a modern, practical body of knowledge and to inculcate them in democratic, American ways – in other words, to Americanize them. The home economics movement developed concurrently with this national “social housekeeping” movement that promoted social uplift, Americanization, and vocational education.³

This essay explores the Americanization efforts of educational leaders in Texas during the Progressive Era to demonstrate that reformers did not use vocational education, and specifically home economics, primarily to Americanize immigrant and ethnic minority students to become good, working-poor citizens. Through Americanization efforts in vocational curricula, reformers hoped to provide economically disadvantaged students with a practical body of knowledge and democratic values that would create healthy, economically viable communities occupied by loyal, educated American citizens. Federal legislation that promoted the development of vocational education in the first half of the twentieth century demonstrates that this way of thinking reflected national rather than regional trends. In Texas, vocational education was largely directed at a population that was predominately white and rural. That

³ For a discussion of the national Progressive movement in regards to education see Lawrence T. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961; reprint, Vintage Books, 1964); and David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974). For a discussion of the national vocational education movement see Roy W. Robert, *Vocational and Practical Arts Education: History, Development, and Principles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Layton S. Hawkins, Charles A. Prosser, and John C. Wright, *Development of Vocational Education* (Chicago: American Technical Society, 1962); and Arthur F. McClure, James Riley Chrisman and Perry Mock, *Education for Work: The Historical Evolution of Vocational and Distributive Education in America* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1985).

decision by educators casts considerable doubt on assertions that they were primarily motivated by racialized thinking. Notably, home economics curricula was constructed over the framework of Americanization, and children who took such courses in rural schools received training that advocated respect for others, cooperation, an appreciation of high culture and the value of aesthetics, efficiency and thriftiness, and good hygiene practices. The homemaking program at the South San Antonio high school in the 1944-1945 school year provides an example. Homemaking teacher Nell Kruger's curriculum reached far beyond training future housewives, waitresses and maids. She sought, in accordance with the state-mandated home economics curriculum, to provide a practical body of knowledge and to inculcate democratic values in her students. This essay seeks to further nuance the understanding of Americanization efforts through vocational education, specifically homemaking, during the Progressive Era in Texas by arguing that Americanization reflected an urban, middle-class perspective directed toward economically disadvantaged white students as well as immigrant and ethnic minority students.

Misconceptions about home economics are understandable considering the chronic problems the profession has experienced over the past century and continues to struggle with today. From the onset, founders disagreed about the name, the purpose, the goals and the emphasis of their profession and discipline. Ellen Richards, recognized as the most important pioneer in modern American home economics, organized the first gathering in Lake Placid, New York, in 1899 to formally establish the profession and discipline. Richards limited invitations to ten of the nation's top researchers, including

men and women, in related fields. At the meeting there were nearly as many suggestions for a name of the emerging profession as participants. The group struggled to reconcile the different goals and emphases each suggestion implied – household arts, domestic economy, domestic science, eugenics, “oekology” (later human ecology), or home economics. They argued over whether the goals should focus on training, teaching, or municipal housekeeping and if the emphasis should include cooking, sewing, cleaning, or science-based efficiency in the home. In an effort to compromise and create cohesion among varying opinions, they named their profession and discipline “home economics” and incorporated all goals and emphases. They hoped the term would reflect the broad connection between women’s traditional roles in the home and the new study of social science. The group’s inability, however, to define narrower, more manageable boundaries sentenced the overly-ambitious discipline to a lifetime of identity crises and left the door wide open for misinterpretation and harsh criticism.⁴

Historically, home economists never conspired to keep women at home, perpetually making babies and cooking dinner, as many historians and radical feminists seem to believe. Nor did they scheme to direct immigrants and ethnic minorities into the domestic industry to keep the floors clean and the silverware shiny.⁵ On the contrary,

⁴ Emma Seifert Weigley, “It Might Have Been Eugenics: The Lake Placid Conferences and the Home Economics Movement,” *American Quarterly* 26 (March 1974), 79-96. For the conference proceedings see *Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics* (Lake Placid, NY: Lake Placid Club, Essex Co., 1899-1908); v. 1-10.

⁵ For negative treatments of home economics see Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of Experts’ Advice to Women* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1978), 165-86; Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), “Chapter Eleven: The Business of Housekeeping,” 202-23; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 187; Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986), 176-90; and Glenna Matthews, “Just a Housewife”: *The Rise and Fall of*

home economists hoped to improve society generally, and help poor, uneducated women specifically. They used contemporary scholarly research to drive their profession; however, home economists did not live in a vacuum, outside of racialized, gendered and class-based thinking. Richards believed that “human conditions” could improve through education, proper sanitation, and nutrition - as did most Progressive reformers. She explained that “not through chance, but through increase of scientific knowledge; not through compulsion, but through democratic idealism consciously working through common interests, will be brought about the creation of right conditions, the control of environment.” Richards embraced the philosophy of eugenics, defining the idea as “the betterment of living conditions, through conscious endeavor, for the purpose of securing efficient human beings.” Thus, a fusion of practical training, Americanization and eugenics, or “right living,” became the pedagogical foundation for home economics curricula throughout the first half of the twentieth century.⁶

Home economists sought out individuals they perceived as needing their services. As industrialization invited massive waves of immigrants to urban areas in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, home economists focused their efforts on immigrants’ impoverished living conditions. White Americans living in rural areas suffered similar living conditions as they waited for the benefits of capitalism,

Domesticity in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), “Chapter Six: The Housewife and the Home Economist,” 145-71. For an excellent reinterpretation of home economics see Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti, *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

⁶ Ellen H. Richards, *Eugenics: The Science of Controllable Environment – A Plea for Better Living Conditions as a First Step Toward Higher Human Efficiency* (Boston: Whitcomb & Barrows, 1910), vii (quote); for a discussion of Richards’ philosophy of eugenics, see Weigley, “It Might Have Been Eugenics,” 79-96.

industrialization and the latest scientific knowledge to reach them. Home economists believed that through the process of Americanization, and with a practical knowledge base, urban immigrants and rural white citizens could achieve a higher standard of living and more thoroughly enjoy the opportunities provided by American liberties.

Historians' perceptions of homemaking classes directed towards Mexican students may stem partly from the lack of comparative studies in Americanization historiography. Many Progressive reformers relied on vocational education as a means for Americanizing students from varying demographics. Vocational education included agriculture, homemaking, and manual and industrial training courses. Consistent with their own gendered expectations, reformers directed male students into agriculture classes and female students into homemaking classes. Both sexes, however, could take classes in manual and industrial training. Overwhelmingly, historians limit their research to the Americanization of immigrant and ethnic minorities, missing an opportunity to comparatively examine the Americanization of white students. Without a comparison, vocational education emerges as a second-rate curriculum used to Americanize immigrant and ethnic minority students for elitist, racist reasons.

Historical syntheses of the Americanization movement at the national level are confined to the immigrant experience. Edward George Hartmann offered one of the earliest comprehensive works, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant*. Hartmann provided a wealth of information on the development of the Americanization movement as it matured from individual participation to group action and finally to government involvement. He believed the movement ultimately failed in Americanizing immigrants

but succeeded in creating bitter foreign-born citizens who resented forced assimilation. Nonetheless, Hartman claimed the movement instilled a sense of national tolerance for future immigrants. That he selected 1923 as the end date for the Americanization movement suggests his conclusions were incomplete and premature, considering the federal anti-immigration policies that followed. The significant enlistment of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the United States military during World War II further refutes the idea that they harbored ill feeling towards the United States. John Higham reevaluated the Americanization movement in his groundbreaking book, *Strangers in the Land*. Higham argued that national traumas, such as war and economic downturns, triggered xenophobic behaviors that in turn created hostile environments for immigrants. He demonstrated that Americanization was a by-product of early twentieth-century nativism. Like Hartmann, Higham viewed the movement as a failure but believed it led to the national anti-immigrant sentiment that followed. Both authors mention the use of vocational education as a means to Americanize immigrant groups but go no farther. By neglecting to analyze vocational education in more depth and excluding the Americanization of white students, the authors give the false impression that reformers employed vocational education as a means to Americanize only immigrants.⁷

Similarly, historians who study Americanization programs in the Southwest neither compare Mexicans experiences with those of whites nor thoroughly examine

⁷ Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 157; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1955), for a discussion of Americanization efforts, see "Chapter Nine: Crusade for Americanization," 234-63.

vocational education curricula. In his dissertation, “The Citizen Factories: The Americanization of Mexican Students in Texas Public Schools, 1920-1945,” Thomas E. Simmons framed Americanization as a pedagogical method favored in Texas by Progressive reformers. While Simmons mentioned that educational leaders recognized the value of Americanizing all students, he emphasized the Americanization of Mexicans, portraying Americanization as a pedagogical tool reserved primarily for immigrant and ethnic minorities. Additionally, he glosses over the dire state of Texas’s entire public school system, preferring to highlight the conditions of the schools Mexican students attended, and suggests that officials surreptitiously implemented vocational programs when they “upgraded” educational institutions attended by Mexicans. In actuality, most Texas students - white, African American, Mexican, and others - received second-rate educations at schools in deplorable conditions. Educational leaders continuously blamed small tax bases and insufficient school tax rates as the main culprits for Texas’s wretched public school system but failed to convince taxpayers to rectify this problem for any significant amount of time. They often took advantage of federal funding to upgrade schools when school taxes failed to do the job. During this time the federal government offered matching funds for schools promoting vocational programs. Many schools jumped at the opportunity, even those attended by white students. Furthermore, educators used vocational programs as a means to Americanize all students, including whites, and believed the curricula was

appropriate for the majority of the state's scholastic population, which was rural, poor, and white.⁸

Simmons's scholarship helped pave the way for future inquiries into the Americanization of Mexican students in Texas and a decade later scholars delved deeper into the notion that educators directed Mexican students into vocational classes to learn how to become good citizens and manual laborers. In *"Let All of Them Take Heed,"* Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., concluded that the popularity of vocational education coincided with rising rates of attendance among Mexican students in upper elementary and secondary grades in the late 1920s, failing to acknowledge that vocational programs had long been popular in rural Texas and in the United States. That proponents of

⁸ Thomas Simmons, "The Citizen Factories: The Americanization of Mexican Students in Texas Public Schools, 1920-1945," (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas A&M University, 1976). Simmons cites Herschel T. Manual, *The Education of Mexican and Spanish Speaking Children in Texas* (Austin, TX: The Fund for Research in the Social Sciences, UT, 1930), for information pertaining to the education of Mexican students. Simmons refrains from including Manual's findings, "When provisions for Mexican children are compared with those for other white children, a great variety of conditions is found. In many cases there is an obvious discrimination against Mexican children-often extreme. In other cases there is an apparent equality between the two," 61. Later, Manual reported that "the provisions made for the public education of Mexican children vary from none at all to apparent equality with those made for other white children," and "in contrast with the picture of neglect and antagonism often seen, some communities are making special efforts to give the Mexican child the education he needs," 90. Again he asserted that "many communities make an intelligent effort to provide ample school facilities [for Mexican children]," 154. Manual found that children whose parents were unskilled laborers who moved frequently likely did not attend school, 14. Also, he believed that Mexican children's unfavorable standing in schools was mainly caused by "(a) lack of knowledge of the English language; (b) the low social-economic status and cultural level of a large proportion of the population," 36. "The problem of educating Mexican children in many communities is rendered difficult by conditions associated with the low economic and social level of a large number. Hygienic conditions present a special difficulty among children of the lowest social level," 90. He claimed that "at the lowest end of the scale are conditions indescribably poor, and with them the usual train of attendant evils - overcrowding, undernourishment, disease, superstition, filth, and social maladjustment. No description is adequate for the person who has not seen such conditions close at hand," 18. These were conditions home economist addressed in their curricula. Furthermore, he found that "the aim of these [homemaking] classes is to produce home-makers rather than servants; incidentally, however, the work does help to place members of the class who desire employment" 89. Last, he applauded vocational programs for providing special educational opportunities for Mexican students, 87 and stated that "teachers and others in close contact with the education of Mexican children report a fine response to educational opportunities," 90.

practical training targeted white students in addition to Mexican students did not seem to have registered with San Miguel. He argued that when schools provided vocational training to Mexican students the “economic productivity of the individual could be increased and the needs of the local economy met.” Furthermore, San Miguel, who never cited a single home economics curriculum guideline, implied that homemaking teachers simplified the curriculum for Mexican girls and tailored it to train them for domestic work. George J. Sánchez continued in the same vein with his book, *Becoming Mexican American*. Sánchez believed agents of Americanization attempted to “transform the values of the Mexican immigrant” but failed to outline differences between the Mexican and American value systems. He argues that “teaching the Mexican mother proper American homemaking skills was meant to solve two problems at once: a happy and efficient mother would create an environment suitable for molding workers to the industrial order, and her newfound homemaking skills could be utilized in the cheap labor market outside the home.” Because homemaking was not a main focus of Sanchez’s monumental contribution to border studies, he largely based his conclusions about homemaking on the conclusions of other scholars and his general misunderstanding of homemaking curricula. Some historians did attempt a more neutral treatment of Americanization through vocational programs, though the overall impression remained the same – educators used vocational training to keep Mexicans working in low paying jobs.⁹

⁹ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., “Let All of Them Take Heed:” *Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1987), 46 (quote), 47. George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, culture and identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), “Chapter 4: Americanization and the Mexican

Later historians created a theoretical model to examine positive aspects of Americanization programs, in addition to the negative. To commemorate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican American War of 1846-1848, San Miguel and Richard R. Valencia collaborated to write, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to *Hopwood*: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest." The authors proposed that there were two types of Americanization –"additive" and "subtractive." They argued that "additive" Americanization meant to supplement a child's cultural background while "subtractive" Americanization meant to discourage immigrant and ethnic minority culture while promoting American ideals. While the analytical lens had promise, the authors were quick to assert that "additive" Americanization was rare and short lived. Thus, the authors maintained the tradition of highlighting the negative aspects of Americanization, henceforth referring to it as "subtractive" Americanization. Histories written since the article do not stray far from the orthodox view of Americanization. This essay seeks to complicate that interpretation by concentrating on

Immigrant," 87-107, 88 (first quote), 100 (second quote). Sánchez misreads the main goal of Ellis' *Americanization*, which was to instill "an appreciative understanding of life and its complexities and a sincere respect for the ideals of Democracy," 65, not creating "an environment suitable for molding workers to the industrial order," as claimed Sánchez. Progressive reformers/home economists distrusted industrialization; they were far from conspiring with industrialists to keep Mexicans on the lower socioeconomic rungs of society. See also San Miguel, "'Go After the Women': Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant Woman, 1915-1929," in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, ed. by Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois (New York: Routledge, 1994), 284-297. For histories with attempts at more neutral treatments of vocational education used as a means to Americanize Mexican students see Richard A. Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), "Chapter 6: Education," 175-203; and Maria Cristina Garcia, "Agents of Americanization: Rusk Settlement and the Houston Mexican Community, 1907-1950," in *Mexican Americans in Texas History*, ed. by Emilio Zapata, Cynthia Orozco, and Rodolfo Rocha (Austin, TX: Texas State Historical Association, 2000), 121-37. For an example of the rare histories that present a positive treatment of Americanizing Mexicans see Gene B. Preuss, "Progressivism in Texas: The Origins of LBJ's Educational Philosophy," (M.A., Southwest Texas State University, 1993), 71-4.

efforts by Texas educators to bring vocational education to white rural students. Without this point of comparison, it is difficult to assess the intentions of those educators and impossible to determine the degree to which racialized thinking influenced their actions.¹⁰

¹⁰ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., and Richard R. Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to *Hopwood*: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest," *Harvard Educational Review* 68 (Fall, 1998): 353-412, discussion of "additive" and "subtractive" Americanization can be found on 358. For an example of an education history that utilized the Americanization theoretical model and focused on the "subtractive" type of Americanization, see Carlos K. Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), "Chapter 4: The Rise of Americanization Curriculum, 1918-41," 59-73. See also Gene B. Preuss, *To Get A Better School System: One Hundred Years of Education Reform* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 2009), 44.

CHAPTER II

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Vocational education in the United States dates back to the American colonies, but, however, the Industrialization Revolution and World War I supplied the impetus for federal legislation to support the systematic development of vocational programs nationwide. In 1914, the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education reported the vital need for vocational programs, especially in high schools, throughout the country for two very important reasons – the alarming number of untrained workers in the United States and the alarming number of trained workers and relatively large number of trade schools in Germany. The Commission believed that “since commercial prosperity depends largely upon the skill and well-being of our workers, the outlook for American commerce, in competition with that of our German neighbors, is under present conditions not very promising.” The 1910 census documented over 12.6 million persons engaged in agriculture work and more than 14.2 million engaged in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. The Commission believed that fewer than 1percent of these workers received formal training for their occupations. The census did not account for persons engaged in domestic work; however, it can be assumed that the number was significant. Moreover, these workers combined represented 47 percent of persons over the age of seventeen in the United States. If the United States hoped to compete commercially in the world, it could no longer fail to provide useful educations to nearly half of its labor force. The Commission perceived the development of vocational

education as a wise economic investment that would insure national prosperity. The report declared a “great and crying need for providing vocational education...to conserve and develop our resources, to promote a more productive and prosperous agriculture, to prevent the waste of human labor, to supplement apprenticeship, to increase the wage-earning power of our productive workers, to meet the increasing demand for trained workmen, to offset the increased cost of living.” The Commission believed that this problem could be addressed by implementing vocational education programs in the nation’s high schools and establishing trade schools. They understood, however, that states did not have the financial resources to undertake such a tremendous endeavor alone, so the Commission proposed federal, as well as state, funding. Importantly, the report made no mention of specifically targeting immigrant or ethnic minorities, but rather the Commission hoped to “democratize the education of the country...by giving an equal opportunity to all to prepare for their life work.” This chapter will outline federal legislation that promoted the development of vocational education programs, paying special attention to sections of legislation that promoted home economics programs in high schools.¹

Federal assistance for vocational programs began with one of the landmark laws in American history. On July 2, 1862, Congress passed and President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Land Grant Act. The act provided each state with “the endowment, support, and maintenance of, at least, one college, where the leading object shall be ...

¹ Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, *Vocational Education: Report of the Commission on the National Aid to Vocational Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), 12-15, 12 (quotes); and nation population totals taken from <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php> on October 10, 2009.

such branches of learning as are related to agricultural and the mechanic arts.” On November 1, 1866 the legislature of Texas accepted the provisions of the Morrill Act and used the land grant to establish the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College (TAMC), which opened on October 4, 1876. The new institution sought to provide a modern vocational education to rural Texans by using the latest scientific and technological advancements.²

On May 8, 1914, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act, which brought vocational education programs to the home through home extension work or home demonstrations. This act allocated funds for extension work in home economics and agriculture for persons not enrolled in agricultural colleges. Home demonstration agents traveled to homes in rural areas teaching rural citizens agricultural and home economics skills based on the latest scientific developments. The following month the Texas Agricultural Extension Service (TAES) became a part of TAMC and worked in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. In August, the college appointed Bernice Carter as an assistant in charge of the Girls’ Club, which promoted home economics activities. Home economists hoped the club, other similar organizations, and advocates of home economics would help rally support for homemaking programs in public schools by stimulating interest in the girls and their parents.³

² *Morrill Land Grant Act, Statutes at Large* 12, Ch. 130, 503 (1862), Sec. 4 (quote). See also *General Laws of The State of Texas* (hereafter referred to as *Laws of Texas*), 11th Legislature (Austin, TX: 1866), Joint Resolution Number 14 – November 1, 1866, 267; and George Sessions Perry, *The Story of Texas A and M* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1951), 221.

³ *Agricultural Extension Work Act (Smith-Lever), Statutes at Large* 38, Ch. 79, 372 (1914); and Kate Adele Hill, *Home Demonstration Work in Texas* (San Antonio, TX: Naylor, 1958), 6.

During World War I more federal legislation increased public school attendance. On September 1, 1916, Congress passed the Keating-Owen Act, commonly referred to as the Child Labor Act, which regulated and mandated children's school attendance. The previous year the Texas legislature passed a similar compulsory law that required all children from eight to fourteen years of age to attend school. Thus, as the 1916 school year began, school administrators faced a ballooning student population that included a significant percentage of poor female students who needed an education that related to their rural lives. Despite the laws, Texas continued to face attendance problems from their rural scholastic population for a variety of reasons. Proponents of vocational education argued that if rural schools provided their students with an education practical to the rural lives of these students, it would help increase school attendance.⁴

With the Smith-Lever Act that facilitated home demonstration work, the compulsory laws, and the success of a few budding, experimental homemaking programs at select districts (discussed later in this essay), home economics began to gain further popular support from state educational leaders in Texas. However, interested parties quickly realized the lack of uniformity in home economics programs and the pitfalls from this inconsistency. Homemaking programs' curricula differed from school to school and homemaking teachers had varying levels of qualifications ranging from little to no formal education in the discipline. On February 23, 1917, Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act, the first act specifically meant to systematically develop

⁴ *Keating Owen Act (Child Labor)*, *Statutes at Large* 39, Ch. 432, 675 (1916); and *Laws of Texas*, 24th *Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1915), Ch. 49 "Compulsory Education - Providing for the Attendance of Children of Certain Ages Upon Public Schools- March 13, 1915," 92-98. See also SDE, *Compulsory School Attendance*, Bulletin 53, July, 1, 1916 (Austin, TX: SDE, State of Texas, 1916) and Frederick Eby, *The Development of Education in Texas* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), 230.

vocational education programs in public high schools. Among other things, the legislation appropriated annual funds to help improve secondary level home economics programs.⁵ Educational leaders in Texas used the funds to train and certify teachers in home economics as well as to create a state-mandated home economics curriculum. Furthermore, the Smith-Hugh Act required students to spend half the day in vocational classes if the school used federal funds to pay the teacher. State curricula writers need to significantly expand traditional home economics curricula to fill the time requirement. Thus, they included related subjects such as sanitation, home nursing, house planning, house furnishing, textiles, millinery, dressmaking, home management, and child care and training, in addition to instruction in garment making, foods and cookery. Programs emphasized instruction in civics in addition to home economics and hoped to meet the needs of girl who wished “to become more efficient from the productive standpoint.” Later, annual reports demonstrated a consistent increase in request for state and federal aid for the development of home economics programs during these early years.⁶

⁵ *Vocational Education Act (Smith Hughes)*, *Statutes at Large* 39, Ch. 114, 929 (1917) – “That for the purpose of cooperating with the States in paying the salaries of teachers of trade, home economics, and industrial subjects there is hereby appropriated for the use of the States, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and eighteen, the sum of \$500,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and nineteen, the sum of \$750,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty, the sum of \$1,000,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty-one, the sum of \$1,250,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty-two, the sum of \$1,500,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty-three, the sum of \$1,750,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty-four, the sum of \$2,000,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty-five, the sum of \$2,500,000; for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twenty- six, the sum of \$3,000,000; and annually thereafter the sum of \$3,000,000.” (Sec. 3)

⁶ *Vocational Education Act (Smith Hughes)*, Smith-Hughes required that “schools or classes giving instruction to persons who have not entered upon employment shall require that at least half of the time of such instruction be given to practical work on a useful or productive basis, such instruction to extend over not less than nine months per year and not less than thirty hours per week.” (Sec. 11) Thus, the law required the following: if a high school student was taught one class by a teacher paid in full or in part from Federal vocational funds, that same student could receive no more than fifty per cent academic

The Purnell Act followed the Smith-Hughes Act on February 24, 1925. This bill provided an endowment for agricultural experiment stations. Although home economics was not specifically named in the bill, the Smith-Hughes Act established home economics as part of vocational education. Congressmen made part of the funds established by the Purnell Act available for home economics research, an area that remained in dire need of attention.⁷

Into the late 1920s and early 1930s Congress continued to provide federal funding for the development of vocational education, passing the George-Reed Act in February 1929. The new legislation did not have instructional time requirements and it extended federal funding for vocational education programs for five years, ending June 30, 1934. The funding started out at \$500,000 for each state and increased each year by \$500,000, reaching 2.5 million dollars in the last year. The money was split evenly between vocational agriculture and home economics and was intended to attract well-trained professional in those respective fields.⁸

instruction. The Federal Vocational Board was quickly able to extend the control of students' time to what came to be known as the 50-25-25 rule: 50 per cent time in shop work; twenty-five per cent in closely related subjects, and twenty-five per cent in academic course work; State Board of Vocational Education (hereafter referred to as SBVE), *Federal Aid for Vocational Home Economics in Texas, under the Smith-Hughes Law*, Bulletin 75, February 1, 1918 (Austin, TX: State Department of Education (hereafter referred to as SDE), 1918), 7; SBVE, *State Plans for Vocational Education in Texas: Home Economics Education, 1927-1932*, Bulletin 223-C, July, 1927 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1927); SBVE, *First Annual Report of the State Board for Vocational Education, 1917-1918*, Bulletin 95, July 1, 1918 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1918), 15 (quote); and SBVE, *Vocational Education: Financial Report, 1917-1926*, Bulletin 217, January, 1928 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1928), 20-27. See also SDE, *Texas High Schools: Home Economics*, Bulletin 114, April 12, 1920 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1920), 4-5.

⁷ *Purnell Act, Statutes at Large* 43, Ch. 308, 970 (1925) – “The funds appropriated pursuant to this Act shall be applied only to paying the necessary expenses of conducting investigations or making experiments bearing directly on...such economic and sociological investigations as have for their purpose the development and improvement of the rural home and rural life, and for printing and disseminating the results of said researchers.” (Sec. 1)

⁸ *George-Reed Act, Statutes at Large* 45, Ch. 153, 1151 (1929); *Agricultural Extension Work Act (Smith-Lever), Statutes at Large* 45, Ch. 687, 711 (1928); McClure, *Education for Work*, 80-81.

When time expired on the George-Reed Act, Congress renewed vocational education funding with three additional pieces of legislation that all supplemented the newly extended Smith-Hughes Act and funds provided by the state. The George-Ellsey Act, passed in May 1934, provided homemaking with \$1 million dollars annually through 1937. On June 8, 1936, Congress approved the George-Deen Act, providing home economics with \$4 million dollars annually, in addition to over \$300,000 for training vocational homemaking teachers. Because of the poor state of the national economy, states were only initially required to match 50 percent of federal funds for the first five years, increasing 10 percent each year after 1942 until all funds were matched in 1947. On August 1, 1946, the George-Barden Act further increased funds and provided more flexibility in spending. By the 1940s, home economics programs mushroomed under the plethora of federal moneys provided for improvement.⁹

Other federal legislation advanced home economics indirectly. In 1937, the Wagner-Steagall Act, a housing bill that promoted low rent, inadvertently aided the development of home economics because it increased the availability of sanitary, low income housing. Home economists, who had long championed the benefits of sanitary living, applauded the measure.¹⁰ Another piece of federal legislation fundamentally changed the nature of housework and, by extension, home economics curricula. The Rural Electrification Acts of 1936 and 1938 made electricity widely available to the rural

⁹ *Agricultural Extension Work Act (Smith-Lever)*, *Statutes at Large* 46, Ch. 73, 83 (1930); *George-Ellsey Act*, *Statutes at Large* 48, Ch. 324, 792 (1934); *Vocational Education Act of 1936 (George-Deen)*, *Statutes at Large* 49, Ch. 541, 1488 (1936); *Vocational Education Act of 1946 (George-Barden)*, *Statutes at Large* 60, Ch. 725, 755 (1946); McClure, *Education for Work*, 81-86.

¹⁰ *United States Housing Act of 1937*, *Statutes at Large* 50, Ch. 896, 888 (1937); *United States Housing Act of 1937*, *Statutes at Large* 52, Ch. 554, 820 (1938).

population, and, like Wagner-Steagle, it indirectly aided the development of home economics. Technological advances promised by electrification created demand for training in newly electrified homes. Home demonstrators from various companies eagerly hit country roads to show rural homemakers how electricity eased their domestic chores. In particular, they showed women more effective cooking methods and the sanitary benefits of using electric water pumps. Not only did the act create a larger demand for home economists, it also added one more component to homemaking curricula - facility and equipment knowledge.¹¹

The 1930s proved to be a roller coaster decade for vocational education. As Congress passed legislation that supplemented funds for vocational education provided by the Smith-Hughes Act, President Herbert Hoover proposed to abolish the Federal Board for Vocational Education and transfer its responsibilities to the Department of Interior (where the Office of Education resided) in December 1932. The board, an independent agency of the federal government, had been responsible for the administration of the Smith-Hughes Act, federal vocational funds, and programs and research concerning vocational education since July 1917. On several occasions Congress praised the board's performance and objectiveness and therefore did not approve Hoover's proposal. By October 1933, however, Congress could no longer ignore the need to downsize the federal government because of the economic state of the nation and agreed to transfer the functions of the board to the Secretary of Interior when

¹¹ *Rural Electrification Act of 1936, Statutes at Large* 49, Ch. 432, 1363 (1936); *Rural Electrification Act of 1938, Statutes at Large* 52, Ch. 554, 818 (1938); *Laws of Texas, 44th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1936), S.C.R. No. 13 "Various State Institutions and Departments Authorized to Assist Rural Electrification Administration – October, 31, 1936," pg. 2137; Hill, *Home Demonstration*, 41.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt reissued the request. The board members remained in an advisory capacity but, because they were not financially compensated, the board met infrequently and had little influence on vocational education. Soon after, Roosevelt instructed them to conduct a study of federal aid for vocational education. The board reported the need for revisions to laws that allocated federal funds for vocational education and suggested significant reductions in federal funding for vocational education. After receiving federal funding hand over fist for two generations, Roosevelt effectively ended funding for home economics. It would not be until well after World War II that home economist would receive such substantial federal funding again.¹²

¹² McClure, *Education for Work*, 80-86; and John Hillison and Gary Moore, "The Federal Board for Vocational Education: Its Composition, Controversies, and Contributions," *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education* 10 (Fall 1993), 28.

CHAPTER III

PROGRESSIVE REFORMS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, AND AMERICANIZATION IN TEXAS

At the turn of the twentieth century, state Progressive reformers worked to improve public education in Texas in an effort to provide better employment opportunities for the state's children and to attract new industries to the region. Reformers strove to improve the quality and quantity of teachers and schools in Texas, and they hoped to systemize the state's public educational institutions through a better organized bureaucracy. Reflecting national trends and recognizing the state's agricultural base, educational leaders emphasized the need to strengthen rural schools and to develop vocational education in agriculture, trade and industry, and home economics. Furthermore, Progressives believed that public schools should inculcate American democratic values in all students, thus they strongly pushed Americanization and citizenry classes in the state's mandated curricula for all elementary schools. At the high school level, vocational education continued teaching democratic values. Educational leaders in Texas in the Progressive Era did not use vocational education to track immigrants and ethnic minorities into manual labor, nor did they use vocational education curricula as a vehicle to Americanize only immigrant and ethnic minority students. Reformers viewed vocational education and Americanization as practical and

necessary for all rural students. The vast majority of those students were classified as white and male.¹

Rural Schools

The quality of rural schools greatly concerned educational leaders in Texas during the early decades of the twentieth century. On September 1, 1910, sixty-five percent of Texas's scholastic population, children ages seven to seventeen, lived in rural, poverty-stricken school districts that failed to meet even minimum standards of education. Reformers believed that the welfare of a democratic society depended on the proper education of all its citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or class. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, F.M. Bralley, voiced support for universal education, stating that "every child in the State is entitled to equal educational opportunities with every other child in the State." Since the majority of Texans lived in

¹ For a discussion of the Texas Progressive movement in regards to education, see Norman D. Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug: Texas Politics, 1921-1928*, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), 140-42, 259-260, 365; Debbie Mauldin Cottrell, *Pioneer Women Educator in Texas: The Progressive Spirit of Annie Blanton*, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), "3. Politics and Education, 1870-1901," 42-76, "4. Education and the University of Texas, 1922-40," 77-106; and Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives & Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1973), "Chapter 7: Ferguson's War with the University of Texas," 185-221. For examples of histories that present vocational educations as a means to track immigrant and ethnic minority students, see San Miguel, Jr., "Let All of Them Take Heed," 46, "[educators] argued that [Mexican children] should be provided with some specific vocational skills so that they could find a job in the local economy;" Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican America*, 100, 107 "to help alleviate the shortage of housemaids, seamstresses, laundresses, and service workers in the Southwest...Americanization programs were busy training Mexican women...[Mexicans] were intended only to assimilate into the bottom segment of the American work force as low-paid, yet loyal, workers;" and Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class*, 177-178, "In essence, the school district wanted an Americanization and a vocational program for Mexicans because the city needed skilled and semiskilled English-speaking Mexican Americans."

rural communities, reformers perceived an imperative to address the poor quality of education rural schools provided their students. Bralley's successor, W.F. Doughty, expressed concern "about the education of every boy and girl in Texas," and strongly recommended "that the more fortunate be not unmindful of the great problem of poverty which is always everywhere present." By improving rural school districts, reformers hoped to improve the education for Texas children and, thus, hasten the state's economic progress.²

State educational leaders worried about several systemic conditions in rural schools. First, schoolhouses were too small, inadequately equipped and devoid of modern sanitation. Many schoolhouses consisted of only one or two rooms, a situation that handicapped a school's ability to differentiate between grades. Rural school districts could not teach subjects that required special equipment because they could neither house nor afford it. The shortfall prevented teaching vocational education, a knowledge base perceived as most appropriate for rural students. Most schools did not have a library or standardized textbooks, and they often used any books available to students at home. Furthermore, rural schools frequently lacked proper heating systems, ventilation, potable water supplies or means to prevent soil pollution. This lack of sanitation created breeding grounds for a host of preventable illnesses. State Health Officer, Dr. Ralph Steiner, called it a "shocking barbarity that States of the American

² SDE, *Scholastic Population and State Apportionment Available School Fund, 1910-1911*, Bulletin 3, 1910 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1910), 35 (common school districts and independent school districts having fewer than 150 scholastics totaled 625,917 as compared to common school districts and independent school districts having more than 150 scholastics, which totaled only 342,352, the total scholastic population totaled 968,269); SDE, *Consolidation of Rural Schools: School Buildings and Plans and Local Taxation*, Bulletin 15, May 15, 1912 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1912), 7 (first quote from "Advantages of Consolidation"); and SDE, *Compulsory*, Bulletin 53, 24 (second quote from "Clothing, Food, and other necessities of life).

Union in the twentieth century enacted laws compelling attendance in school where unhygienic conditions often menaced the life and infallibly injured the health of every child condemned to respiring their foul air, to sitting in their unevenly heated and draughty rooms, or to walking bare-footed on their polluted soil.”³

Second, country schools offered no standard course of study, and the subjects taught did not relate to their agricultural lifestyles. Moreover, these schools provided a second-rate education compared to urban schools. Most families, however, lacked funds for boarding their children in city schools. Because schools generally did not offer practical training for students, parents had little incentive to send their children to school past the age of fourteen or at times during the year when duties on the farm and ranch required the children’s labor. Only a small minority ever completed high school. In 1910, of the 49,437 students in high school, a mere 4,484 graduated. Third, the school year accommodated the agricultural needs of the community and ran shorter than the school year in urban areas.⁴

Last, a significant proportion of the rural school teachers had little to no university training. They frequently taught many, if not all, of the subjects offered to rural students, and they had sizable classes with children of all ages and intellectual levels. “A condition impossible of description,” claimed Bralley, “that makes the work

³ SDE, *Consolidation*, Bulletin 15, 5-8 (list of conditions); and SDE, *Proceedings of the County Superintendents’ Institute held at Waco, Texas, December 28, 1911*, Bulletin 14, February 15, 1912 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1912), 18 (sanitation information and quote from State Health Officer, Dr. Ralph Steiner’s address on “Rural Hygiene”). Dr. Ralph Steiner, an Austin native, earned his M.D. from the University of Maryland in 1883, served as the State Health Officer from 1911-1915 during the administration of O.B. Colquitt. See also, Mrs. George Plunkett Red, *The Medicine Man in Texas*, (Houston, TX: Standard Printing & Lithographing Co., c1930).

⁴ SDE, *Consolidation*, Bulletin 15, 5-8; SDE, *Proceedings*, Bulletin 14, 25 (statistics of high school graduates from State Superintendent of Public Instruction, F. M. Bralley’s address “Response to Address of Welcome”).

of teacher and children a subject for derision and ridicule.” To worsen matters, the chronic problems of rural schools affected the majority of the scholastic population.⁵

In 1911, addressing the “crying necessity for further progress and development in the school system of Texas,” the state legislature officially declared the condition of rural schools an emergency. The Texas legislation passed House Bill #138, the *Rural High School Law*, on March 6 and it became effective on June 11. The law provided funds for the establishment, organization and control of public high schools in rural (or common) school districts. It encouraged the consolidation of smaller school districts into larger districts by bestowing the power to consolidate upon county boards of education. Educational leaders believed that consolidating several small school districts into larger school districts would help remedy many of Texas’s educational problems because it would increase the tax base for rural districts. An increased tax base would mean increased school funds for needed improvements and additions.⁶

The 1911 act required the county board of education to classify schools in rural districts as primary, intermediate or high school and to prescribe the same courses of study to all Texas public schools. Classification meant students received age appropriate schooling that proved unfeasible when many children of different ages and intellectual levels took classes together. Additionally, all students in Texas would, theoretically, receive the same quality of education with state mandated courses of study. Thus, the house bill established rural high schools as an integral part of the state’s public school

⁵ SDE, *Consolidation*, Bulletin 15, 5-8, 7 (quote from “Advantages of Consolidation”).

⁶ SDE, *Proceedings*, Bulletin 14, 27 (quote from Bralley’s address “Response to Address of Welcome”); SDE, *The Rural High School Law*, Bulletin 9, 1911 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1911), 3-7 (law provisions); and SDE, *Consolidation*, Bulletin 15, 6-8 (advantages of consolidation from “Advantages of Consolidation”).

system, making them accountable to the laws and the educational standards put in place by the state. Furthermore, in accordance with Section 2 and Section 3, the legislation made an appropriation for teaching agriculture, domestic economy and manual training in rural high schools in addition to all the subjects prescribed by law to be taught in urban high schools. Last, the house bill stated that money raised by local school taxes could be used to provide free transportation for children who lived considerable distances from school. The *Rural High School Law* was a major step towards realizing the goals of Progressive reformers. It worked towards systemizing the public education system, it created uniform courses of study for all public schools, it made rural education more practical and it mandated the teaching of vocational education to sixty-five percent of the state's scholastic population, eighty percent of which was classified as white.⁷

Focus consistently remained on rural school districts. At the Texas State Teacher's Association conference in Waco, the state's county superintendents met from December 27-29, 1911, to discuss the importance of creating and maintaining rural schools as the "social centers" of their communities. The superintendents believed that the key to a better democracy was convincing the rural populations of the value of education and community. The McLennan County superintendent, R.L. Abbott, argued that many rural people, failing to appreciate the "cultural side" of education, believed schools primarily benefited teachers. "With them," he believed, "anything, to have a value, must have a dollar and cent measure." Abbott insisted educational leaders needed to help adult rural citizens – along with rural students – realize the cultural capital

⁷ SDE, *The Rural High School Law*, Bulletin 9, 1911 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1911), 3-7; SDE, *Consolidation*, Bulletin 15, 6-8; and SDE, *Scholastic*, Bulletin 3, 35 (demographic statistics information).

education provided. Only then could the rural community work together in accomplishing “social uplift.” Henderson County superintendent C.D. Owens shared a similar sentiment regarding the importance of cooperation in lifting the community “up and out of itself.” Owens recognized that rural populations faced economic and sociological problems that impeded the “uplifting” process. He stressed the importance of community leaders’ addressing social issues, declaring that “so long as people live in squalor, lessons in ethics are wasted.”⁸

Haskel County superintendent T. C. Williams proved just as enthusiastic as his counterparts. He was convinced that the state needed legislation, but also a “successful campaign of educational enlightenment” that touched every citizen in the state. Williams approached his duties with religious zeal common to many Progressive reformers. “We have the missionary duty,” he claimed, “of carrying educational good tidings to the most remote parts of our territory.” The Falls County superintendent, A.W. Eddins, reiterated the importance of classification for rural schools, insisting rural students needed age appropriate education. He advised county board members to tirelessly share plans for school improvement with the public so that citizens could understand the positive implications of receiving classification. In general, the county superintendents at the conference expressed a desire to create social harmony in rural communities so that schools could offer better educational opportunities to their students. Bralley hoped that with help from the county superintendents, Texas could

⁸ SDE, *Proceedings*, Bulletin 14, 3-5 (conference information), 6 (Abbott’s quote from his address, “How to Make the Rural School a Real Social Center and the Benefits that will Accrue Therefrom”), and 8 (Owens’ quote from his address, “Benefits to be Derived from Rural Social Centers”).

establish an educational system that would be a “source of pride rather than of humiliation.”⁹

Progressive reformers believed many rural citizens were ignorant of proper sanitation habits and considered this as detrimental to educational improvement as the communities’ general apathy toward education. At the conference, Steiner spoke to the importance of public hygiene in rural districts. In light of discouraging federal reports that credited high rates of avoidable illness in rural areas to poor sanitation and improper food handling, Steiner advocated cooperation between the medical profession, the government and the public to work towards the “conservation of mankind.” Cooperation and preventive action were essential, Steiner believed, to the health and happiness of a modern society that intelligently employed modern scientific knowledge. “It is reasonable to believe,” Steiner proclaimed “that prophylaxis will in the future prevail so successfully that it will constitute the crowning glory of both the medical science and the social endeavor of the twentieth century.” Steiner briefly mentioned the most devastating health conditions caused from improper sanitation habits (intestinal disturbances due to contaminated water from infected wells, in addition to anthrax, tetanus, malaria, enteric fever, cholera, diarrhea, yellow fever, hookworm disease, and various other parasitical diseases from polluted soil) and urged state superintendents to foster an “intelligent appreciation” for hygiene among their rural citizens.¹⁰

⁹ SDE, *Proceedings*, Bulletin 14, 11 (Williams’ quote from his address, “Classification of Schools by the County Board of Education” and Eddin’s quote from his address, “Classification of Schools by the County Board of Education”), and 27 (Bralley’s quote from his address, “Response to Address of Welcome”).

¹⁰ SDE, *Proceedings*, Bulletin 14, 17 (Steiner’s quote from his address, “Rural Hygiene”), 18-21 (list of illnesses from same address).

The demographics of the scholastic population in Texas during the time of the conference are important to note. In the 1911-1912 school year, the state's scholastic population totaled 991,409. Nearly two-thirds of school-aged children lived in rural communities. Eighty percent of rural children were classified as white. In Abbott's county, McLennan, the total population was sixty percent rural and the scholastic population totaled 17,838, seventy-five percent of whom were classified as white. Owens's Henderson County, one hundred percent rural, had a scholastic population that was nearly seventy-seven percent white. In Haskell County, Williams's white students constituted over ninety-nine percent of the scholastic population in the entirely rural community. Eddins's population maintained a white majority, with sixty-three percent, in Falls County, which was an eighty-eight percent rural community. Furthermore, according to the 1910 U.S. Census, Texas's state population was eighty-two percent white (of whom eighty-one percent were native white persons of native parentage) and seventy-six percent rural. When these superintendents spoke about "uplifting" the communities through a "successful campaign of educational enlightenment" to preserve democratic ideals and provide practical education, they were speaking largely of rural, white adults and children, as was Steiner when he addressed the issue of rural hygiene.¹¹

The State Board of Education persisted with its campaign of educational enlightenment among the rural populations. In the summer of 1912 the board issued

¹¹ SDE, *Public School Officers and Apportionment Bulletin*, Bulletin 12, November 1, 1911 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1911), 37 (summary of scholastic population from "Apportionment of Available School Fund"), 24 (Abbott's McLennan County scholastic population totals from "Scholastic Population and State Apportionment for Scholastic Year 1911-1912"), 17 (Owens' Henderson County), 16 (Williams' Haskell County), 12 (Eddin's Fall County). State and county population totals taken from <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php> on October 10, 2009.

Bulletin No. 15, *Consolidation of Rural Schools: School Buildings and Plans and Local Taxation*. The bulletin provided county superintendents, county boards of education, local trustees, and teachers with information about the benefits of the *Rural High School Law* so that they could disperse the facts to rural citizens. Board members argued that if rural school districts consolidated they would significantly increase their tax base, thus increasing school funds. Consolidated school districts could afford large, sanitary school buildings that could accommodate many classes and different grades taught by an increased number of qualified teachers. They could afford specialized equipment, libraries, and free transportation for their students. If small districts consolidated, they could organize better and teach standardized courses of study, including vocational education, and provide standardized textbooks. Educational leaders hoped that improved schools would encourage children to stay enrolled until graduation. Moreover, board members continued to argue that rural schools could serve as social centers of the community, thus functioning at many levels. Bralley hoped to be able to convince rural citizens that consolidation was vital, concluding that “the maintenance of a liberal system of public education for the children of rural schools is essential to civic welfare, the righteousness of which is no longer a mooted question among intelligent people.”¹²

Aspiring towards perfection, reformers began a more critical evaluation of the public school system. On March 13, 1915, the Texas legislature passed a compulsory law that required all children from eight to fourteen years of age to attend school. The law went into effect September 1, 1916. In a bulletin explaining the law to interested

¹² SDE, *Consolidation*, Bulletin 15, 54 (quote).

parties, Doughty stated that “for more than a generation the negro has been our chief scapegoat for backwardness in the educational statistics of the South, but no longer can this old excuse do satisfactory service in the face of the facts.” He noted that in the United States Census of 1910, of the 282,940 Texans ten years of age and older who were illiterate, fifty-six per cent classified as white. Additionally, whereas illiteracy among whites had increased by 11,299 persons between 1900 and 1910, illiteracy among African Americans decreased by 42,520 people. The overall literacy rate in Texas increased during that decade from 85.5 percent to 90.9 percent, most due to improved literacy among African Americans. According to statistics of 1913-1914 school year compiled at the Texas State Department of Education, the scholastic population totaled 1,433,476. About 870,000 (162,000 of whom were black) enrolled in public schools, and 30,000 either graduated or attended private or parochial schools. It estimated that a stunning 563,476 students, or sixty-five percent, either did not enroll in school or did not complete the school year. Of this total, less than 17 per cent were African American children. Of the students enrolled, approximately 44 out of 100 were absent from school daily, with whites having a 66 percent attendance record and African Americans 57 percent. Citizens could no longer ignore the fact that the education problems in Texas were not entirely due to the African American scholastic population. Doughty concluded,

We have great need of a most efficient system of schools for the proper education of all the children of all the people...All faint-hearted Southerners who doubt the wisdom of universal education should not forgot the words of General Robert E. Lee, which were spoken at the close of the Civil War in the midst of reconstruction, when he faced the tremendous problem of helping to build a new South out of the ruined

Confederacy: “Education of all classes of people is the best means of promoting the prosperity of the South.”¹³

Reformers pressed for more improvements in rural schools in 1916. Concern continued to center on those schools because in many rural communities people believed that education was “necessary only for those who expect *to live without work*.” The Thirty-fourth Legislature addressed this concern and passed what become known as the *Million Dollar Appropriation*. The law provided substantial state funding for country schools to provide adequate facilities for the education of rural children. More than 1,200 country schools took advantage of the extra funding and provided their students with adequate accommodations for the first time. Doughty looked to the future, predicting that “the great twentieth century problem is distinctively an educational one, and the twentieth century rural school must be properly organized, as an efficient unit in the economic plan for rural betterment so that its effect shall be emphatically expressed in terms of better prepared and happier citizens in the country with an education which they can ‘hitch up life.’”¹⁴

After the *Million Dollar* law, educational leaders continued to work towards improving rural schools with the creation of libraries, the distribution of standard textbooks, the addition of new facilities and the development of vocational programs. Creating uniform courses of study for all Texas students and laws intended for the promotion of vocational education greatly aided these efforts.

¹³ *Laws of Texas, 24th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1915), Ch. 49 “Compulsory Education - Providing for the Attendance of Children of Certain Ages Upon Public Schools– March 13, 1915,” 92-98; and SDE, *Compulsory*, Bulletin 53, 16 (statistics), 17 (quote).

¹⁴ SDE, *Million Dollar Appropriation Country Schools*, Bulletin 54, July 1, 1916 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1916), 7 (first quote, italics in original), 11 (second quote).

Vocational Education

Vocational education began to flourish across the state in the early years of the Progressive Era. In 1896 John T. Allan bequeathed Austin High School the first vocational education department (later known as the Allan Manual Training School of Austin). The department sparked interest in vocational education regionally. From 1900 to 1906 the following cities established their own manual training and domestic economy departments: Cleburne, Denison, Dallas, Fort Worth, Sherman, Marshall, Belton, Beaumont, Taylor, San Antonio, Waco, Hillsboro, Abilene, Cuero, Houston and Paris. Realizing that most rural communities could not foot the bill without state assistance, the Texas State Teachers' Association estimated the cost of establishing vocational education departments in other cities and lobbied the state legislature for funding.¹⁵

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the state, understanding the "importance of manual training in the industrial life of the people," demonstrated an increasing commitment to the promotion of vocational education. In 1903 the state passed a bill to provide \$10,000 for the development of agricultural, manual training and/or home economics departments in high schools. In 1909 the state funds increased to \$32,000, and legislators authorized the State Board of Education to match any amount from \$500 to \$2000 that trustees of local schools designated for the purchase of

¹⁵University of Texas (hereafter referred to as UT), *Status of Manual Training and Domestic Economy in the Secondary and Higher Schools of Texas*, Bulletin 71, December 20, 1915 (Austin, TX: UT, 1915), 5-6; Eby, *Development of Education*, 253-257.

vocational department equipment. In accordance with the *Rural High School Law* (1911) the state provided matching funds up to \$50,000 to local districts for the development of vocational departments in rural areas. In the first year, rural communities established vocational education departments in forty-five schools and hired teachers with college degrees in vocational education or with extensive experience in vocational work. The following year the state published a course of study, primarily intended for rural schools, which included the instruction of vocational education. On April 7, 1913, the Texas legislature passed an act to provide for the establishment and maintenance of the Gainesville Texas State Training School for girls, where delinquent and dependent girls went for rehabilitation and to learn vocational skills.¹⁶

In 1917, the federal Smith-Hughes Act gave a tremendous boost to the development of vocational education. Historian Frederick Eby argued that the United States had been “the most backward of the great powers in technical and vocational training ,” but not until World War I was the “fact deeply impressed upon leaders of the nation.” Texas matched federal funds, increasing the number of vocational departments in high schools, and established the State Board of Vocational Education to supervise the state’s vocational education departments. The state maintained a consistent flow of

¹⁶ *Laws of Texas, 28th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1903), Ch. XLVIII “Manual Training”, pg. 66-67, 67 (quote); *Laws of Texas, 31st Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1909), Ch. 113 “Normal Schools – Providing for Teaching Agricultural, Etc.,” 221-223; *Laws of Texas, 32nd Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1911), Ch. 26 “High Schools – Providing for the Establishment and Control in Common School Districts of Texas, and Making An Appropriation Therefor,” 34-38 (See also, SDE, *Rural*, Bulletin 9); SDE, *Proceedings*, Bulletin 14, 29 (number of vocational education departments from “Other Significant Work”); SDE, *Course of Study for the Public Schools*, Bulletin 25, September 1, 1913 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1913), 15-17 (“industrial education”); *Laws of Texas, 33rd Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1913), Ch. 144 “Girls’ Training School – Provides for the establishment and location of same – April 7, 1913”, 289-292; *Laws of Texas, 34th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1915), Ch. 26 “Extending Time to Board of Control of Girls’ Training School in which to use certain funds appropriated by the State – June 4, 1915”, 54.

funding for vocational education until 1923, when Texas permanently accepted the provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act.¹⁷

Despite upgrades in rural schools and increased funding for vocational education, the divide between urban and rural scholastic populations persisted. In the early 1920s over half of scholastic age children either did not enroll in school or did not complete high school, with two-thirds of non-attendees living in rural areas. While the non-attending rate fell fourteen points from 1915, it remained high. Furthermore, Texas still lacked the facilities and work force to serve these children even had they decided to enroll in and complete high school. The State Board of Education continued to push for the consolidation of rural schools to increase the tax bases of rural districts so that they could afford proper facilities and trained teachers. Educational leaders hoped that by addressing the rural issue, they would be addressing the majority of the problem.¹⁸

Concurrently, promoters of vocational education worried about children who did not enroll in school, finish high school and those who did not go to college. After examining the statistical evidence, education critics in the state asked why college-

¹⁷ Eby, *Development of Education*, 255 (quote). See *Laws of Texas, 35th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1917), Ch. 45 “Appropriation to Comply with Federal Vocational Education Act – June 5, 1917,” 194-196; *Laws of Texas, 36th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1919), Ch. 114 “An Appropriation for the Promotion of Vocational Education in Order to Accept the Benefits of a Federal Appropriation Made for the Same Purpose – March 24, 1919,” 179-181; *Laws of Texas, 36th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1919), S.C.R No. 19 “Relating to Vocational Education as Provided in Smith-Hughes Act – February 19, 1919,” 371-372; *Laws of Texas, 37th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1921), S.B. No. 34 “Vocational Education – Making Appropriation for, and Accepting the Benefits of the Federal Act – August 21, 1921,” 28-30; *Laws of Texas, 37th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1921), Ch. 43 “Rural Aid for Schools – Appropriation for the purpose of promoting the public school interests of rural schools and small towns – August 31, 1921,” 141-146; *Laws of Texas, 38th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1923), Ch. 28 “Appropriations for State Departments,” 249; *Laws of Texas, 38th Legislature* (Austin, TX: 1923), Ch. 131 “Education – Providing for Vocational Education – March 24, 1923,” 271-272; and SBVE, *Equipment for Teaching Home Making in Texas High Schools*, Bulletin 140, January, 1922 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1922).

¹⁸ SDE, *Historical and Statistical Data as to: Education in Texas, January 1, 1919-January 1, 1921*, Bulletin 133, August, 1921 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1921), 5-6 (“A Brief Survey of Educational Conditions and Accomplishments During the Biennium”).

preparatory instruction continued to dominate high school curricula in Texas when only 5 to 10 percent of children who finished high school went on to college, and half the enrolled scholastic population received nothing beyond an elementary education. Children in the Lone Star State, they concluded, lacked preparation for the futures that likely awaited them.¹⁹

During the Progressive Era, Texas remained a rural, agricultural state. In 1920 farming remained the leading occupational sector among men. Without instruction in the vast technological and scientific developments in farming and an understanding of emerging agricultural business, however, future farmers of Texas would not be able to compete in the industrializing world. The leading occupation in Texas was homemaking, but girls received no training in the domestic arts. In 1925, 13 percent of all deaths in Texas were children younger than one-year-old, a grim statistic reformers believed reflected poverty, poor sanitation and parents' ignorance concerning health and infant care. Almost one-third of Texas school children were 10 percent under weight, a condition that educators attributed largely to poverty, paternal incompetency or both. Moreover, housewives spent 90 percent of the total family income, yet most had received no training in money management.²⁰

Proponents of vocational training also emphasized the need to prepare both girls and boys for jobs outside the home and off the farm. With specific training one could enter carpentry, auto mechanics, retail, stenography, machine writing, millinery or a

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ SBVE, *Vocational Education in Texas*, Bulletin 204, April, 1926 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1926); 11-12 (statistics), 29. Occupation statistics taken from <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php> on October 10, 2009.

number of other vocations the industrialized world offered. Moreover, educators believed that vocational education would equally benefit white students as well as immigrant and ethnic minority students, helping them become self supporting and offering new employment opportunities. For educational leaders, expanding vocational education by taking advantage of federal and state funding seemed vital to the welfare of the state, and they worked diligently to persuade parents and taxpayers.²¹

Despite Progressive reformers' efforts and federal initiation, vocational education faced heavy opposition after passage of the Smith-Hughes Act. In 1925, Texas governor Miriam A. Ferguson reduced state funding for all vocational education from \$312,000 to a devastating \$21,000. The 39th state legislature, under Ferguson's direction, declined federal funding provided by the Smith-Hughes Act. In a 1926 bulletin issued by the State Board of Vocational Education, State Superintendent and Executive officer S.M.N. Marrs raged, "If public education means all the children of all the people, it is nothing short of criminal to neglect more than half the boys and girls of Texas and let them learn their jobs in the school of hard knocks just because they find themselves unable to use the college preparatory course of the typical Texas high school." Nonetheless, Texas educators and private contributors managed to keep programs alive – barely. The slash in funding briefly handicapped development of vocational education in Texas until 1927, when the state legislature jumped back on

²¹ SBVE, *Vocational Education*, Bulletin 204, 19, 35.

board with their federal counterparts by providing the necessary matching funds to support vocational programs well into mid-century.²²

Americanization

Americanization represented a defining component of vocational education. Scholars argue that the growing wave of southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrants to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century concerned white, native-born Anglo Americans. Those citizens worried about immigrants' abilities to assimilate to the middle-class, Anglo Saxon, Protestant, English-speaking way of life. Reformers responded to this concern by proposing Americanization efforts that would ensure complete assimilation into the American, democratic lifestyle. Teaching proper hygiene habits became inextricably linked with this assimilation process because supporters they believed a successful society directly correlated with a healthy society. In the early twentieth century, xenophobia and Progressive education dovetailed nicely in the form of Americanization. Many historians acknowledge, as previously mentioned, that the movement was a colossal disaster, as proponents were blind to the value of cultural diversity at best and outright racist at worst.

²² SBVE, *Vocational*, Bulletin 204, 11 (quote). See also Eby, *Development of Education*, 256-257, "The expansion of the curriculum was the sign of the coming of a new spirit and new aims. The schools as formerly organized were failing to

Generally, academia holds the process of Americanization in contempt and has only recently offered a more nuanced theoretical lens for understanding the assimilation process. Scholars divide Americanization into two categories: “additive” or “subtractive.” Additive Americanization was popular in the later decades of the nineteenth century. This version, historians recognize, embraced cultural pluralism and merely hoped to add to a child’s cultural background without discarding it completely. Subtractive Americanization encouraged complete conformity to American ideals and taught that ethnicity was dangerous to the social fabric of the United States. It is this form of Americanization that many historians claim matured during the Progressive Era. Revisiting bulletins published by the Texas State of Education Department in the early decades of the twentieth century reveals a slightly different understanding of the Americanization promoted in Texas during the Progressive Era. Furthermore it complicates the process by highlighting the Americanization of a number of demographically diverse students, including poor, rural white males.

Board members strove to offer the scholastic population a uniformed course of study throughout Texas as part of their larger plan for educational improvement. On September 1, 1913, the State Department of Education released the state’s first *Course of Study for the Public Schools* since the passage of the *Rural High School Law*, which had established uniformed courses of study for state public schools for the first time. Educational leaders incorporated Americanization lessons early and throughout the scholastic career of all Texas students. There were five main goals of Americanization, to teach respectful, democratic behavior with an understanding of civic, communal duty;

to instill a proper understanding of the English language; to convey an appreciation of Western culture and the value of aesthetics; efficiency and thriftiness; and to impart the value of good hygiene practices.

The Americanization process began simply. Teachers taught all primary school children to act respectfully towards authority, to speak and read aloud and clearly in English, to write legibly, to observe and understand nature and geography, to memorize choice selections of poetry and prose, to know and enjoy age appropriate literature, and to understand and observe the rules of good health. These goals, along with an understanding of math and history, began the process of creating “proper” democratic citizens, which continued in a similar manner in intermediate schools. At the high school level, educators kept implicit lessons of Americanization in college preparatory subjects (English, mathematics, history, Latin, Spanish, physiology, physical geography, economy and physics), and also in vocational classes. State board members emphasized the importance of vocational training in this process, stating that “general intelligence, scientific knowledge, and systematically developed skill, with a larger interest in civic righteousness, and the acquirement of a broad culture as equipment for the social, spiritual, and economic duties one owes to himself, his community, and his State, constitute, in part at least, the direct and logical result of industrial education.” Furthermore, educational leaders believed that the “interior of every schoolhouse in Texas should be such as to give the impression of refinement, culture, and good taste to the students of the school.” Progressive reformers hoped to instill the value system they believed the majority of successful Americans embraced by the twentieth century, a

system that put the utmost value on democratic behavior, education, cultural appreciation and cleanliness.²³

Educational leaders turned to national figures for inspiration as they remained dedicated to inculcating all elementary students in Texas with American values. In the 1919 *Manual and Course of Study: Elementary Grades*, the State Board of Education listed “Patriotic Work” as part of the curricula. At the beginning of the curriculum guideline for this subject, the board quoted Charles Alvin Brooks, who believed “Americanization is the achievement of national unity for world service upon the plane of our highest ideals. It is an unwavering and united progress toward the goal of those ideals which we confess we have not yet attained, but for which we are still striving.” Brooks served as Secretary of the City and Foreign Speaking Missions of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in New York City. He authored several books that advocated Americanization including *Christian Americanization: A Task for the Churches* (1919) and *Through the Second Gate: Baptists in Action Among New Americans* (1922). Brooks believed that all people living in the United States should have access to the opportunities that the American Dream promised but worried that immigrants rarely enjoyed such luxuries. He reminded people that “it is impossible to exploit the foreigner, to use him as so much labor material, and expect him at the same time to love America and be one hundred per cent.[sic] a good citizen. It is humanly out of the question to develop American standards of living, education and character, in sub-American slums and un-American industrial colonies.” Brooks cautioned citizens not to

²³ SDE, *Course*, Bulletin 25, 15 (first quote) 20, 39, 64-65, 105 (second quote).

mistake Americanization with nativism and to avoid approaching the process with racist notions. Moreover, he argued in *Christian Americanization* that the process of Americanization benefited native born Americans as well as the foreign born. He quoted fellow reformer and sociologist Frances Alice Kellor, who feared that “our real enemy is not aggressive foreignism but a passive, complacent Americanism...What we really need to fear is not that we shall be invaded by civilizations and ideals we cannot assimilate but that we shall fail to develop and perpetuate and extend to all Americans the civilization and ideals we firmly believe to be American.” The curriculum guideline also included William Tyler Page’s *American’s Creed*, a concise statement of the American political faith, which won a nationwide patriotic contest in 1916. Overall, the 1919 *Manual and Course of Study* firmly established Americanization as an integral part of schooling all Texas children.²⁴

²⁴ SDE, *Manual and Course of Study: Elementary Grades, Public Schools, 1919*, Bulletin 105, September 1, 1919 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1919), 80-88 (“Patriotic Work,” Brooks’ quote from 80; repeated in Bulletin 134, *Manual and Course of Study: Elementary Grades, Public Schools, 1921*, 96; Bulletin 152, *Manual and Course of Study: Elementary Grades, Public Schools, 1922-23*, 108; Bulletin 184, *Manual and Course of Study: Elementary Grades, Public Schools, 1924-25*, 132; and Bulletin 226, *Course of Study for Elementary Grades, Public Schools of Texas, 1927*, 179. Elementary teachers referred to Bulletin 226 until 1936 due to the inadequate appropriations for printing the SDE bulletins. For several years the board only provided brief suggestive outlines meant to supplement the 1927 version. The board maintained the process of Americanization, however, and demonstration of this can be found in: Bulletin 274, *Outline Course of Study for Elementary Schools, 1930*, 33 (“Civics”); Bulletin 337, *Suggestive Outline Course for Studies in the Elementary Grade, 1934*, 35-36 (“Citizenship”); and Bulletin 357, *Suggestive Outline Course for Studies in the Elementary Grade, 1936*, 49-52 (“American Citizenship”). From 1936-1944, courses of study for elementary grade continued the process of Americanization, yet less explicitly.; Dr. Charles Alvin Brooks, *Through the Second Gate: Baptists in Action Among New Americans*, (New York City: The American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1922), 17 (quote from “Part 1: Missionary Aspects of a National Problem”); Brooks, *Christian Americanization: A Task for The Churches*, (New York City: Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1922), 12 (Kellor quote from Chapter I: “The Present Issue”); and SDE, *Manual*, Bulletin 105, 80 (Page’s creed; repeated in Bulletin 134, 96-97; Bulletin 152, 108-109; Bulletin 184, 132-133; and Bulletin 226, 179).

Educational leaders in Texas wanted to ensure that all its future citizens would perpetuate American democratic ideas. In the 1921 course guideline for elementary grades, the board expanded on the “Patriotic Work” subject. They outlined ten “laws” of good American citizenship which included the laws of health, self-control, self-reliance, reliability, clean play, (civic) duty, good workmanship, team-work, kindness, and loyalty. Progressive reformers considered tolerance essential to proper citizenship. Under the law of kindness, the guideline states: “In America those who are of different races, colors, and conditions must live together. We are of many different sorts, but we are one great people. Every unkindness hurts the common life, every kindness helps the common good.”²⁵

In addition to these laws of citizenship the guideline instructed educators to teach their elementary students William J. Hutchins’s moral code: “Boys and girls who are good Americans try to become strong and useful, that our country may become even greater and better. Therefore they obey the laws of right living which the best Americans have always obeyed.” In 1916, responding to the national perception that schools should provide character training in order to maintain the integrity of the country, the Character Education Institution in Washington, D.C., sponsored a National Morality Code competition for the best children’s code of morality. Hutchins won the competition. Educated at Oberlin College, Yale University, and Oberlin Theological Seminary, Hutchins taught homiletics and served as president at Berea College in

²⁵ SDE, *Manual and Course of Study: Elementary Grades, Public Schools of Texas, 1921*, Bulletin 134, September 1, 1921 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1921), 89-119 (“Patriotic Work”), 92 (quote from “IX. The Law of Kindness;” laws repeated in Bulletin 152, 101-104, 107-108; Bulletin 184, 128-132; and Bulletin 226, 175-178).

Kentucky, the first interracial and coeducational college in the South. Interestingly, the course manual also included educational leader Caroline M. Brevard's "High School Morality Code," also from the Character Education Institute, possibly to remind elementary teachers of the ultimate goals the state hoped to achieve by the end of a child's scholastic career.²⁶

In the 1922 course of study, the State Board of Education added Sarah S. King's "A Civic Creed," originally written for Bowie School in San Antonio, to the manual. The creed reiterated the proper behavior expected of American citizens and ultimately replaced Brevard's code in the courses of study. This last addition satisfied educational leaders, and the state used the 1922-23 version of the "Patriotic Work" subject until 1936.²⁷

After 1936, the courses of study for elementary grades no longer listed "Patriotic Work" or any other type of American citizenship or civic subjects as part of the curriculum; however, the process of Americanization continued. Instead, educational leaders integrated the goals of Americanization, "preparing boys and girls for membership in society," into other subjects: social studies, history, government, English, spelling, reading, writing, music, art, health, nutrition, and agriculture. Citizenship

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 89-119 ("Patriotic Work"), 89 (Hutchins' quote; repeated in Bulletin 152, 100-101; Bulletin 184, 128; and Bulletin 226, 174-175), 93-95 (Brevard's code; repeated in Bulletin 152, 104-107).

²⁷ SDE, *Manual and Course of Study: Elementary Grades, Public Schools of Texas, 1922-23*, Bulletin 152, September, 1922 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1922), 108 (King's code; repeated in Bulletin 184, 132; and Bulletin 226, 179); and James Davison Hunter, *Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age without Good or Evil*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 56.

education lessons carried over to the curricula of secondary schools, especially in vocational education classes like homemaking.²⁸

²⁸ See SDE, *Tentative Course of Study for Years One through Six*, Bulletin 359, May, 1936 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1936); SDE, *Course of Study for Years One through Three*, Bulletin 391, November 15, 1938 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1938); SDE, *Tentative Course of Study for Years Four through Six*, Bulletin 354, January, 1939 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1939); and SDE, *Elementary Education Suggestive Outline*, Bulletin 412, September, 1941 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1941). No other course of study, guideline or outline exists until after 1946.

CHAPTER IV

HOMEMAKING CURRICULUM

Taking heed of national trends, Texas's State Board of Education welcomed Americanization as a pedagogical approach for all its students and used vocational education, including homemaking, to help teach "right living" at the high school level. Throughout early decades of the twentieth century architects of the homemaking curriculum came to favor a Progressive, skills-oriented approach. This method instilled an explicit understanding of democratic values and an implicit understanding of what pedagogy scholar Lisa Delpit later identified as the "culture of power," the codes or rules for participating in power. Home economics curricula facilitated the ideology of a democratic, family-and community-centered life. Curricular goals emphasized that useful citizens were efficient, resourceful, thrifty, understanding (emotionally and culturally), adaptable, well-adjusted, social, creative, health and sanitation conscious, visually pleasing (home and self) and problem solvers. Additionally, good citizens appreciated and understood the value of working, volunteering and contributing to the wellness of their families and communities. Homemaking teachers established an authoritative role, perceiving their students as empty "containers" needing to be "filled" with knowledge, and maintained this role until midcentury. Homemaking trained individuals to be productive and cooperative citizens in a democratic society and to understand themselves as members of their families and communities. Thus, home

economists advocated a definition of citizenship predicated on families and communities, rather than individuals, being the most important elements in society.¹

Superimposing the goals of home economics over those of Americanization reveals remarkable similarities. Home economists, like other vocational education leaders, openly embraced Americanization as a pedagogical method. Knowing Progressive reformers actively Americanized all students, using various subjects, regardless of race or ethnicity, on the other hand, casts the curricular goals of homemaking in a new light. Home economists did not intend to “white wash” immigrant or ethnic minority students, nor did they desire to keep them on the lower rungs of society. On the contrary, promoters of vocational education generally hoped to “uplift” society by aiding those who occupied the lowest rungs of society. In Texas,

¹ The Progressive, skills-oriented approach provides students with skills and information deemed appropriate to live democratically by curriculum writers. This method is commonly associated with Americanization programs like homemaking. For a discussion of “culture of power,” see Lisa D. Delpit, “Chapter Six: The Silenced Dialogue - Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children,” in *Language Issues in Literacy and Bilingual/Multicultural Education*, Masahiko Minami and Bruce P. Kennedy, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review, 1991), 119-139. Delpit argues that there are five aspects of power expressed in educational institutions: “1) Issues of power are enacted in classrooms, 2) There are codes and rules for participating in power, that is, there is a “culture of power” 3) The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power 4) If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier and 5) Those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willingly to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence” (121-122). Decades later Paulo Freire brought attention to the idea of students as empty “containers” by denouncing this approach in his critique of Western and Third World countries’ educational systems, *Pedagogy of The Oppressed*, (New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1970, 1988), 58. For a discussion of gendered perspectives, see Carol Gilligan, “Chapter Three: Images of Relationship,” in *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Gender and Education* foreword by Susan M. Bailey, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002: 51-87. Gilligan theorizes that women and men are socially constructed to develop emotionally and psychologically along gendered-specific paths resulting in gendered-specific perceptions and cognitive processes. Complicating (and gendering) Sigmund Freud’s theory presented in “On Narcissism” (1914), which traced the development of the capacity to love, Gilligan states that a woman’s perspective “is a world of relationships and psychological truths where an awareness of the connection between people gives rise to a recognition of responsibility for one another, a perception of the need for response” (57). Thus, Gilligan argues that women’s perspective is largely based on the idea of “network of relationships.” Based on Gilligan’s theory and the Progressive sentiment of the era, one recognizes how home economists came to frame their idea of citizenship on family and community.

these people were rural, uneducated, and predominately white. By Americanizing these students, reformers hoped to provide them with the knowledge (codes of power) necessary to become successful in American society, to have access, in short, to the “American Dream.” Regardless of the American Dream’s validity, Progressive reformers, including home economists, believed it to be a truth and acted accordingly.²

As educational leaders improved rural schools and government supplied funding for vocational education, the development of home economics benefited. The birthplace of homemaking programs in Texas is San Antonio. In 1895 the Women’s Club of San Antonio opened a free sewing school. Four years later, lacking sufficient space for all interested girls, club members Eleanore A. Stribling and Annie E. Austin wrote a letter to the San Antonio School Board requesting use of the upper floor of Public School No. 3, on Saturdays from nine to noon, until San Antonio public schools offered manual training and sewing classes. A year later, the board granted the club permission to use the facilities and informed the women that the board was considering adding a sewing course in public schools. The club’s sewing instructor, Anna E. Hilton, provided the board with information regarding the logistics of implementing such a program. This initial curriculum guide was simple and only included the basics of teaching sewing. It also required instructors to take only five lessons prior to teaching. In the fall of 1902,

² James Truslow Adams coined the term “American Dream” and defined the idea as “that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.” See James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1931); and Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that shaped a Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003).

after another two years of waiting, the school board gave the green light, and San Antonio Public School No. 3 held its first official high school sewing class.³

The board named Hilton supervisor of the sewing department, where she remained until 1905. In January 1903, Hilton wrote a letter to *Texas Manual Training Magazine* stating that San Antonio was “proud to be the first town in Texas to open this field of industry to girls” and hoped that soon “every boy and every girl...may be offered by the common public schools to receive manual and physical training side by side with the intellectual one.” Hilton strongly advocated vocational education in state public schools and ended the letter by stating, “Then only can we hope for perfect specimens of manhood and womanhood. Let Texas come to the front and be in this the banner state of the union.”⁴

In 1906, Emma Pirie replaced Hilton as supervisor of the sewing department and remained in the position for the next thirty seven years. Born and raised in San Antonio, she received an impressive education in home economics. Pirie attended the College of Industrial Arts, the University of Tennessee, Fannie Farmer’s Cooking School and Columbia University. During her four-decade term as supervisor in San Antonio, Pirie worked continuously to expand the homemaking curriculum offered in Texas high schools.⁵

Soon after her appointment Pirie recommended adding cooking to the curriculum in San Antonio. Additionally, she wrote two of the early text books for homemaking, A

³ Marthasu Daniel, “A History of Home Economics in Secondary Schools of Texas,” (M.A, University of Texas, June 1959), 40, 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 69; and Anna E. Hilton, “Manual Training for Girls in San Antonio Public Schools,” *Texas Manual Training Magazine* (January 1903), 13-16, 15 (first quote), 15-16 (second quote);

⁵ Daniel, “History,” 70.

Sewing Course (1906) and *Science of Homemaking* (1915). Pirie dedicated herself to the home economics movement in Texas and worked relentlessly towards achieving academic respectability for the field. She kept Texas residents informed of the developments in homemaking programs with columns in the *San Antonio Daily Express* and the *Houston Daily Post*. When Pirie died on January 17, 1951, “Texas, as well as the rest of the United States, lost one of their greatest home economists, a woman who loved her field enough to promote and establish the first courses of home economics taught in Texas inaugurated in the schools of her home town.” With sustained federal and state funding, monetary support from the community and leadership from Hilton and Pirie, departments of home economics flourished throughout the city and state during the first half of the twentieth century.⁶

After the *Rural School Law* (1911), which required public schools to teach vocational education, home economists worked diligently to update their curricula to meet the needs of the students. Hilton and Pirie authored the earliest curriculum guidelines, which included instructions for only sewing and cooking. As more school districts established home economics departments and improved facilities in their local schools, home economists broadened their curriculum to include: household management, family economics, home decoration, millinery, hygiene of family and house, physiology, household chemistry, bacteriology, dietetics, preservation of food, and other related courses.⁷

⁶ *Ibid.*, and *San Antonio Daily Express*, 20 January 1951, 10 (quote).

⁷ SDE, *Rural*, Bulletin 9, 3, 9; and UT, *Status*, Bulletin 71, 10-12.

Soon after, home economists outlined six areas of concentration. These included family relations, clothing the family, housing the family, health, first aid, home care of the sick, child development, and feeding the family. Under the leadership of home economist Mary E. Gearing, attendee at the Lake Placid Conferences, the Texas Home Economics Association (THEA) organized a committee to write the first official homemaking syllabus for high school teachers in 1914. While the six areas of concentration remained the same, THEA wanted to emphasize the “scientific aspects of the subject matter.” In 1916 the syllabus was slightly updated and the following year, after the Smith-Hughes Act had passed, home economists adjusted the curriculum to meet the requirements of the act. The early guidelines hoped to provide “training as will best fit a girl for rendering efficient service in the home, and in the social life of which she is a part,” so that students could “give the rising generation a higher standard of health and happiness.”⁸

Homemaking curricula writers continued to mold the curriculum to the needs of students. In 1919, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Annie Blanton appointed the State Home Economics Committee to work in cooperation with two State Directors of Home Economics, Agnes Ellen Harris and Lillian Peek. Blanton wanted the committee to formulate plans and policies for home economics programs in public schools and to write a comprehensive syllabus containing courses of study in Home Economics, Home Nursing, Biology, and Pure and Applied Design. The University of Texas and the College of Industrial Arts hosted the meeting of these home economics

⁸ SDE, *Course*, Bulletin 25, 78-84, 78 (quote from “Domestic Economy”); and SDE, *Home Economics*, Bulletin 114, 7.

educators in November, 1919. The committee, which included both Pirie and Gearing, built upon earlier syllabi but reduced the areas of concentration to domestic art, design, domestic science and home nursing.⁹

The committee also formulated a list of sixteen more specific aims (see Table 3.1). These aims complimented four of the five goals of Americanization. These included instilling respectful, democratic behavior with an understanding of civic, communal duty; an appreciation of high culture and the value of aesthetics; efficiency and thriftiness; and the value of good hygiene practices. Additionally, teachers stressed good note-taking skills in class so that students had an opportunity to practice grammatically correct English, the final goal of Americanization.

⁹ SDE, *Texas*, Bulletin 114, 3-6. The State Home Economics Committee consisted of the following members: Mary E. Gearing and Bess Heflin (UT); Margaret Gleason and Lena Bumpas from the College of Industrial Arts (CIA); Laura Neale from the Agricultural and Mechanical College (AMC); Mabel McBain, the supervisor of Home Economics at the Houston Public Schools; and Emma E. Pirie, the supervisor of Home Economics at the San Antonio Schools. The committee organized the sub-committees as follows: Foods and Cookery – Gearing (chairman), McBain and Elisabeth Lacey (UT); Clothing – Gleason (chairman), Peek, Maud Underwood (CIA) and Otelia Kelley of San Antonio High School; Design – Virginia Alexander (chairman, CIA); Marjorie Logan (UT) and Mrs. Fannie Volck of Houston High School; Biology – Willie Birge (chairman, CIA), Margaret Hessler (UT) and Mattie Beth Morgan (CIA); Physiology – Dr. Carl Hartman (UT); Home Nursing – Mrs. Ethel Parsons of the State Board of Health (chairman) and Charlotte Stoddard of San Antonio High School; The Home and Its Management – Jet Winters (chairman, UT) and Equipment Bulletin – Bumpas and Heflin. At the meeting the committee examined available syllabuses from other states, particularly the 1919 Nebraska syllabus because Elisabeth Lacey, a former member of the Nebraska Syllabus Committee was on the Foods and Cookery subcommittee. Next, each sub-committee presented a tentative outline of course of study for their course and committee members provided feedback. Then the committee presented the suggested outlines to experienced home economics educators for their feedback. After the committee incorporated appropriate feedback into the outlines, the committee approved each course separately.

Over several years, the State Department of Education posted separate bulletins that slightly revised to the 1920 syllabus, though the areas of concentration and the aims remained the same. The first major revision came in 1937, when the aims were condensed to seven (see Table 3.2).¹⁰

¹⁰ See SDE, *Girls' Clothing Contest: Texas High Schools, Plans for 1919-1920*, Bulletin 109, November, 1919 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1919), 5; SDE, *Girls' Clothing Contest: Texas High Schools, Plans for 1920-1922*, Bulletin 129, February, 1921 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1921), 10; SBVE, *Food Study Outlines for Texas High Schools*, Bulletin 162, August, 1923 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1923), 9; SBVE, *Home Nursing for Texas High Schools*, Bulletin 163, July, 1923 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1923), 7; SBVE, *Household Management for Texas High Schools*, Bulletin 164, June 1926 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1926), 6; SBVE, *Home Economics: Texas High Schools, Applied Design and Clothing*, Bulletin 165, September, 1923 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1923), 7; SBVE, *Suggested Outlines for Study of Home Economics in Rural and Small High Schools in Texas*, Bulletin 166, September, 1923 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1923), 11, 30, 47, 54; SDE, *Plans for Girls' Clothing Contest: Texas High Schools*, Bulletin 170, September 1923, (Austin, TX: SDE, 1923), 16-17 ; SDE, *Supplement to Bulletin 170 - Girls' Clothing Contest: Texas High Schools, Fall 1925*, Supplement Bulletin 170, (Austin, TX: SDE, 1925), 3; SBVE, *Teaching Home Economics by Means of Home Projects*, Bulletin 210, September 1926 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1926), 10; SBVE, *Home Economics: Texas High Schools Clothing Course of Study*, Bulletin 213, January, 1927 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1927), 3-8; and SBVE, *Concerning Adult Education in Homemaking*, Bulletin 261, September, 1929 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1929), 7-9.

Table 3.1 Home Economics Curriculum Aims, 1920 ¹¹

Aim	Description
1.	To develop an appreciation of the artistic, hygiene, and economic aspects of textiles, clothing and house furnishings.
2.	To encourage the pupils to look beyond their own immediate desires for a wardrobe to their larger place in society as the consumers or investors of the family incomes.
3.	To cultivate a feeling for beauty or harmonious arrangement in all things.
4.	To offer a means for expression for that feeling other than verbal language.
5.	To develop ability to draw natural and abstract forms so that compositions will be adequate and clear expressions.
6.	To give as much knowledge of the underlying principles of design as will contribute toward cultivation of feeling for harmony of line, form and color and aid in its expression.
7.	To develop menu planning and preparation skills.
8.	To study foods and their preparation for the table.
9.	To give as much background information of food sanitation.
10.	To develop considerations of small courtesies connected with the serving of food.
11.	To develop considerations of applied art and design in serving food.
12.	To furnish the pupils with facts and experiences as a rational basis of healthful living.
13.	To furnish the students with a scientific background for home nursing.
14.	To give students an appreciation of family as an institution and a realization of its purposes and obligations.
15.	To acquaint students with the actual problems of homemaking and to give them a basis for action in the solving of these problems.
16.	To create an interest in community problems that bear directly on home life.

¹¹ SDE, *Texas*, Bulletin 114, aims located on the following pages: 9, 27, 42, 89, 107, 101.

Table 3.2 Home Economics Curriculum Aims, 1937 ¹²	
Aim	Description
1.	Attitudes, appreciation, judgments, skills, abilities and habits essential to effective functioning of home and family life.
2.	A constructive, functioning philosophy of individual, home, and family life.
3.	A desire for a reasonably high standard of living as changing conditions demand.
4.	Ability to maintain or adjust standards of living as changing conditions demand.
5.	A desire for personal development and adjustment.
6.	Ability to establish and maintain satisfactory relations in the home and related groups.
7.	Recognition of the value of homemaking training in certain vocations.

The new aims continued to correlate with the goals of Americanization and, by the late 1920s home economics programs were directed at boys as well as girls. Curriculum writers had considered the topic of homemaking classes for boys since the Lake Placid conferences. In 1928, the State Department of Education published Bulletin 237, which included the first course outline for boy's home economics in Texas. The course looked to teach high school boys fundamental principles of homemaking to make them better members of society and to develop an appreciation of a man's responsibility to his home and to his family. Although the course did not last long, its mere existence casts doubt on claims that home economists intended to trap women in the home.¹³

¹² SDE, *Course of Study in Homemaking* Bulletin 375, October, 1937 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1937), 14.

¹³ SDE, *Course of Study in Home Economics for Texas Public Schools*, Bulletin 237, June, 1928 (Austin, TX: SDE, 1928), 205-208, 205 (aims). Attendees of the Lake Placid conferences wanted home economics to be given "front rank" in school curriculum for all students in all grades. Melvil Dewey expressed home economics' importance at the first conference, stating that "those who can make the home all it should be

In the 1939-1940 school year El Paso, Eagle Pass and Kingsville held their first high school home making classes.¹⁴ This was significant because the vast majority of students attending these high schools, two of which sat on the Mexican border, had a Mexican heritage. Most, furthermore, were beyond high-school age. Homemaking teachers at these high schools used the same curriculum as their counterparts across the state. That curriculum instilled American ideals in Mexican students, just as it did white students. Home economists used Americanization as a pedagogical method, not because of racist notions necessarily, but because they wanted to provide students with the skills they perceived as necessary to succeed in the United States.

While home economists did not create the American value system, they certainly understood it. At the third Lake Placid conference Caroline L. Hunt of the Lewis Institute in Chicago stated that:

Teachers of home economics hold in their power, to an almost alarming extent, the control of values. Recognizing this, they should realize the responsibility which this power entails. They should keep in mind that the world needs the most complete expression of the life of each individual, the fullest exercise of his peculiar talent or talents. They should keep in mind that if the individual is to meet the world's demands he must have health, efficiency, opportunity. It should be the highest aim of teachers of home economics to help him obtain the fullest measure of each...The final test of the teaching of home economics is freedom. If we have unnecessarily complicated a single life by perpetuating useless conventions or by carrying the values of one age over onto the next, just

will get nearer the foundations of life than even teachers, ministers and editors.” (4) Attendees primarily discussed homemaking courses for elementary grades, which both girls and boys took, and college level home economics courses, offered to both women and men. Additionally, they frequently discussed the need for males to understand the fundamentals of home economics. For some examples of this see *Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics, Second Annual Conference, 3 July – 7 July, 1900* (Lake Placid, NY: Lake Placid Club, Essex Co., 1900); v. 2, 25, 32; *Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics, Third Annual Conference, 28 June – 5 July, 1901* (Lake Placid, NY: Lake Placid Club, Essex Co., 1901); v. 3, 69, 110; and *Report of Special Committee of Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics in Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1901* (Lake Placid, NY: Lake Placid Club, Essex Co., 1901); 15.

¹⁴ Daniel, “History,” 100-101.

so far we have failed. If we have simplified one life and released in it energy for its own expression, just so far have we succeeded.

Philosophically, home economists believed it their responsibility and duty to help students reach their potential as individuals and citizens especially the economically disadvantaged. This entailed providing students with the codes of power previously unavailable to them.

CHAPTER V

SOUTH SAN ANTONIO HIGH SCHOOL, 1944-1945

By the 1940s home economics instruction for girls had spread throughout the curricula of Texas schools. South San Antonio witnessed a mingling of cultures produced by an influx of Mexican and European immigrants, and white military personnel. Nell Kruger, a white homemaking teacher at South San Antonio High School, epitomized the home economics ethos and hoped to provide her ethnically diverse class with an appreciation for the Mexican, in addition to American, culture. More importantly, Kruger's pedagogical methods demonstrate that she trained Mexican and non-Mexican girls to be citizens and homemakers and not for employment as domestic workers. On the contrary, Kruger hoped her students would develop the life skills necessary to succeed in American society.

At the start of the 1944 school year Kruger evaluated the girls enrolled in her homemaking class so that she could tailor the program to meet their needs. First, she racially and ethnically categorized the fifty-four girls. She labeled twenty-six students white, ten Mexican, eight German, six African American, three Belgian, and one French. Next, she had the girls complete a questionnaire. Based on their replies Kruger noted a "lack of social consciousness" as evidenced by their apathy toward cultures. In response, she concentrated on developing the girls' appreciation for cultural diversity.¹

¹ Nell Kruger, "An Evaluation of the South San Antonio Homemaking Program," (M.A., Texas State College for Women, 1946), Table 1, 51.

Kruger implemented curricular aims influenced by the Progressive philosophy (see Table 4.1). Goals 3, 4, 6, and 7 explicitly promoted an appreciation for diversity and implied its necessity. Kruger emphasized cultural appreciation for a variety of reasons. San Antonio's diverse population necessitated residents' understanding of other cultures. White San Antonians subjected Mexicans to the same discrimination typically associated with African Americans living under Jim Crow. Kruger sought to limit discrimination by introducing white girls to Mexican culture. To accomplish this she used the city's resources as educational opportunities.

Table 4.1 Kruger's Home Economics Curriculum Aims, 1944 ²	
Aim	Description
1.	Development of one's potentialities through the wise use of material and human resources in the area of home and family life.
2.	A desire to keep an open mind and a consciousness of the relation which this bears to progress.
3.	A conscious development of the ability to work cooperatively in a group and to see value in cooperation in all areas of life.
4.	A growing respect for human beings, whether they be close at hand or far away.
5.	Acceptance of responsibility for helping solve problems at school, in the home, and in the community, particularly where these fall in the area of home and family life.
6.	A consciousness of the pleasure that can be derived from association with other people and a desire to extend one's acquaintance.
7.	A growing respect for one's own cultural background in the area of home living and a desire to enrich this through expanding one's experiences.

²*Ibid.*, 45-46.

On March 15, 1945, the Homemaking Division of the Alamo District State Teachers Association held its annual conference at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio. Kruger and her students held a symposium to show other homemaking teachers in the state how they could develop programs around the cultural needs of students. One student spoke about Kruger's summer visitation program, explaining that the students decided to visit each other's houses and, together, outline the following year's curricular focus. For example, if several of the girls' homes lacked proper sanitation or pleasant décor, then Kruger would emphasize those aspects of the curriculum in class the following school year. Kruger did not anticipate, however, the extremity of the girls' living conditions. Kruger contended that, while some lived in housing that looked as if it had fallen from the pages of a *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, others, specifically the Mexican girls, lived in homes that were little more than shacks. During the visitations her students realized that they needed to adjust their "ideas of differences among nationalities, creeds and finances" and have more respect for all human beings.³

Kruger, sensitive to the Mexican girls' feelings, quickly rectified the situation. She decided, along with the rest of her students, to give the Mexican girls "an opportunity to achieve more self-confidence and perhaps more racial pride." The idea resulted in the Pan-American tour referred to the following student comment:

We blocked out a Pan-American tour of the city...Our invitation was a miniature sombrero and each girl received a chart of her Pan-American tour in the form of a Mexican serape on which we had typed the names of the places which we would be visiting...We started at the La Villita, where we held our executive meeting; from there we went to St. Mary's Cathedral and the San Fernando Cathedral. This was the first time that

³ *Ibid.*, 60 (quote).

many of the girls had been inside a Catholic Church. We then went to the Spanish Governor's Palace and then back to the Mexican Original Café [sic] where we had a genuine Mexican luncheon. There were twenty-four of us. Afterwards we went to the Nacional Theatre [sic]...in our classes were girls whose ancestors were from Belgium, France, Germany, France, Mexico and Spain, and our teacher's parents were from Germany and Switzerland.⁴

La Villita was located in historic downtown and remains the heart of San Antonio. On the corner of Villita and South Presa streets, the enclosure, described as a neighborhood, *barrio* or *colonia*, included several old meager structures that have great historical significance. A walk around Villita would have brought the girls into direct contact with buildings from the Texas Revolution. St. Mary's cathedral, erected in 1856, originally served Irish Catholics. The San Fernando cathedral, built in 1731 by Canary Islanders, originally served Spanish-speaking Catholics. Both churches represent the Catholic legacy of San Antonio and remain vital to San Antonio's heterogeneous culture. The Spanish Governor's Palace (1749) exemplifies eighteenth-century Spanish aristocratic grandeur. As the girls walked through the entrance, the carved, imperial double-headed eagle of the Hapsburg coat of arms would have majestically gazed down upon them.⁵

The girls lunched at 231 Losoya Street where the Farnsworth Family operated the Original Mexican Restaurant, established in 1899. The restaurant specialized in mole poblano, chile rellenos and pescados, exposing the southside girls to a much broader range of Mexican cuisine than was available in the eateries of their own

⁴*Ibid.*, 60 (second quote), 63 (first quote).

⁵ Charles Ramsdell, *San Antonio: A Historical and Pictorial Guide* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1959) 95-101, 103-117.

neighborhood. The tour ended at 819 West Commerce Street, where Sam Luchese built the Teatro Nacional, which showed Spanish-language films, in the heart of San Antonio's theater district in the early 1920s. The Teatro Nacional was vital to the Mexican social scene for decades after its inception. The Mexican girls featured prideful aspects of their culture with classmates, demonstrating their shared heritage of San Antonio. After the tour a non-Mexican student stated that the class needed to "break down discrimination arising from different beliefs and ways of living."⁶

Kruger provided another opportunity for breaking down stereotypes. During the year she required students to work in the lunchroom serving food and washing dishes.

One student remembered her experience:

This type of work [in the lunchroom] helps in destroying discriminations of all kinds. In the first place, take the people who are served. They are of many different nationality origins, religions and financial standings. They sit side by side eating the same food under the same roof and are served by girls of all different levels. I think that a girl working in the lunchroom either gets a feeling of equality or a desire for betterment and a desire to help the less fortunate. I think that people teach and touch you more than all the books ever written

After working in the lunchroom and interacting with students from all backgrounds, this student realized the façade of discrimination.⁷

Another example of the curriculum's meeting the girls' needs involved Kruger and her class's plans for a presentation after the symposium at the Gunter Hotel. One of her students, a polio victim named Lucy Soto, presented "an interpretative Mexican folk

⁶ Jerome Pohlen, *Oddball Texas: A Guide to Some Really Strange Places* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, Inc., 2006), 112; Elizabeth C. Ramírez, *Footlights across the Border: A History of Spanish-Language Professional Theatre on the Texas Stage*, New York: Lang, 1990; and Kruger, "Evaluation," 60 (quote).

⁷ Kruger, "Evaluation," 60 (quote).

dance in order to show one of the means that the South San Antonio Future Homemakers use in learning how to appreciate and understand cultural differences.” After the presentation Lucy explained the meaning of the dance and her costume, which represented various Mexican legends. All of the students in Kruger’s program worked together organizing the symposium, choosing the presentations, leading the discussions, acting as hostesses and constructing Lucy’s costume with little traditional instruction from Kruger. From this experience, and despite their varied backgrounds, the girls learned cooperation, leadership, organization and an appreciation of Mexican culture. The homemaking curriculum provided the girls with the homemaking knowledge and training in civic virtues, specifically an appreciation for diversity, necessary to live in a democratic society. Kruger’s curricular aims also demonstrate that Americanization remained a fundamental element in homemaking classes. In her instructed activities, Nell Kruger anticipated the direction home economics curricula took nationally in the following decade.⁸

Texas Homemaking Conferences

As the mid-century approached, home economists more explicitly promoted an appreciation for cultural diversity. Traditionally, architects of the homemaking curriculum favored a Progressive, skills-oriented approach that instilled an explicit

⁸ *Ibid.*, 58 (quote).

understanding of democratic values and an implicit understanding of the codes. The 1950s, however, proved to be a transitional period in the way home economists approached teaching. World War II shifted the world's perspective on authoritative methods and the discipline of home economics struggled to reconcile maintaining the teacher's role in the classroom as an expert while using a more liberal, process-oriented pedagogical approach.⁹ Additionally, the contradictions of American society surfaced in home economics curricula. In theory, "good" democratic American citizens were democratically open-minded to diversity; practically and socially, at least in Texas, this was not allowed. African Americans remained segregated by law and Mexicans or Mexican Americans suffered discrimination in education, in housing, and in employment. Similarly, law and custom prevented equality of the sexes. Home economists struggled with promoting an appreciation for diversity while adhering to the strict, racialized and gendered status quo. During this time, home economists settled on a hybrid of teaching approaches employing mainly the distinct teaching methods

⁹ The liberal, process-oriented approach encourages students to develop critical thinking skills and is less concerned with the rote memorization and draconian punishment. In contrast to the Progressive, skills-oriented approach which teaches democratic values and specific skill sets, the liberal, process-oriented approach employs a more democratic method in teaching, valuing students for their input and existing knowledge base. Important to the home economics curriculum, the liberal, process-oriented approach compliments three additional pedagogical components that home economists incorporated into their curriculum: "connected teaching," "maternal thinking," and the "midwife teacher." For a discussion of connected thinking, maternal thinking and the midwife teacher see "Chapter Nine: Toward an Education for Women" and "Chapter 10: Connected Teaching" in *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule, eds., New York: Basic Books, 1986, 1997:pp. 190-229. The editors define connected teaching as a method "in which the expert...examines the needs and capacities of the learner...and composes a message that is..." "courteous" to the learner" (194). They include Sara Ruddick's explanation of maternal thinking as a thought process that expects change and adapts accordingly, acknowledging that "change requires a kind of learning in which what one learns cannot be applied exactly, and often not even by analogy to a new situation" (201). Lastly, the editors explain the midwife teacher as teachers who "assist the students in giving birth to their own ideas, in making their own tacit knowledge explicit and elaborating it" (217).

aforementioned. As the decade proceeded, homemaking teachers welcomed more and more student participation in formulating, organizing and leading class activities that taught the students skills needed for democratic citizenship. In employing this hybrid pedagogical method, homemaking teachers upheld the gendered notions embedded in mainstream society while providing an educational space to develop critical thinking skills (called problem-solving skills by home economists). Despite a commitment to gender equity to some degree (home economists believed the discipline was a body of knowledge important to both women and men), homemaking programs reinforced the mystique of family life based on the home and women's roles in the home. Nonetheless, the curricula taught high school girls from various backgrounds how to gain acceptance in their community and to succeed according to contemporary racialized and gendered standards in mainstream American society. Planners of the state conferences, curriculum guidelines and "Idea Exchange for Homemaking Teachers" pamphlets consistently advocated using their hybrid teaching approach for instructing students throughout the early years of the Cold War. For the purpose of this essay, it is useful to analyze these Texas Education Agency (TEA) publications thematically rather than chronologically.

Texas home economics leaders organized annual state conferences for high school homemaking teachers in various locations throughout the state during the summer months before each school year started. Most commonly the conferences, which began in the 1910s, took place at Dallas, Houston, Lubbock (Texas Tech University), Prairie View (Texas A&M University-Prairie View) and San Antonio. Prairie View hosted

conferences for the state's African American teachers while all other teachers attended conferences that moved from city to city. Texas's State Department of Education considered the conferences in-service training and invaluable professional development opportunities. Several school districts required teachers to attend and provided the travel and accommodation funds for the trip. Out of more than a thousand high school homemaking teachers in the state, over eight hundred teachers attended conferences every year during late 1940s and early 1950s. The conferences kept high school homemaking teachers current on pedagogical trends and curricular objectives in their discipline. In fact, conference organizers routinely encouraged homemaking teachers to consult and adapt the "useful" conference reports in their daily teaching activities, as demonstrated in the following quote, "THIS IS YOUR WORKING MANUAL [Capitalization in the original]. It serves best from the top of your daily working area, with a pen or pencil attached." ¹⁰

The conference reports reveal Texas home economics leaders' strict dedication to teaching democratic values in a democratic manner. In 1949, at the African American Texas A&M University - Prairie View conference, officials encouraged teachers to "TEACH democratic living by using democratic practices in our teaching-learning situations. Let individuals with whom we work participate in planning activities and experiences just as teachers participated in planning this conference." The 1950

¹⁰ Texas Education Agency (hereafter referred to as TEA), *State Conference (San Antonio) – In-Service Training Conference for Homemaking Teachers: A Family-Centered Homemaking Program, What is it? How Know It? How Do It?*, Bulletin 536, August 11-15, 1952 (Austin, TX: TEA, 1952), "Forward," "Special Note to Teachers." See also TEA, *Teachers Manual and Report) State Work Conference (Prairie View) –Homemaking Teachers: Strengthening Homemaking Program to Meet Realities in Family Life*, Bulletin 538, August 25-29, 1952 (Austin, TX: TEA, 1952), "Special Note to Teachers."

Houston conference report reiterated the commitment to democratic teaching practices, reaffirming that homemaking teachers needed to “think in terms of the needs of pupils, co-operative planning, democratic atmosphere and a functional program.” A few days later the Prairie View conference convened and the report, reflecting the organizers’ skills-oriented approach to teaching the homemaking curriculum, instructed teachers that “clear, well-defined objectives give direction for the intelligent choice of activities and experiences necessary for achieving desired outcomes....It is generally believed that good teaching brings about changed behavior. Therefore, teachers and pupils will understand more clearly the suggested outcomes, if the objectives are defined in terms of behavior expected.”¹¹

At the 1951 Dallas in-service training conference, Dr. Roach V. Allen, director of Elementary and Teacher Training at Southern Methodist University, helped homemaking teachers chart their educational course. “In this democratic level,” he believed, “each individual is a leader; he carries full responsibility for the group achievement; he voluntarily performs his part in carrying the accepted plan into action; he works intelligently with any director who may be designated by the group to coordinate better the efforts of individual members...In democratic interaction, the purposes are set by the group after inquiry into the needs of the individuals who comprise it.” Later, at the Prairie View conference the Planning Committee asserted that “morale rises in a friendly [read democratic] rather than autocratic atmosphere,”

¹¹ TEA, *State Conference (Prairie View) - Homemaking Teachers: Homemaking Education at Work in the Community*, Bulletin 504, August 24-27, 1949 (Austin, TX: 1949), 37 (first quote); TEA, *State Conference (Houston) - Homemaking Teachers: We Follow the Signposts*, Bulletin 516, August 7-11, 1950 (Austin, TX: TEA, 1950), 8 (second quote); and TEA, *State Conference (Prairie View) - Homemaking Teachers: We Work Toward Our Objectives*, Bulletin 510, August 22-26, 1950 (Austin, TX: 1950), 3 (third quote).

crediting the ideas put forth by Goodwin Watson's article "The Surprising Discovery of Morale" (1942) published in *Progressive Education*.¹²

At the 1952 San Antonio in-service conference, organizers reminded teachers that a family-centered homemaking program "builds its learning experiences out of the realities of family living as it goes on in that particular community, and makes use of democratic techniques to achieve satisfactory family and community living at each age level." Organizers stressed the importance of tailored programs that incorporated hands-on experience and democratic techniques for successful teaching. Two weeks later at the Prairie View conference, home economics leaders reinforced the importance of democratic behavior in teaching. "Learning to work together in groups is one of the most profitable and stimulating experiences in a democracy. We have a serious and deep responsibility to our friends, our children, and our society to learn to work together. This work in group discussion is the heart and soul of the democratic way of life. We can use it in the solution to our common problems."¹³

In 1953 at the Dallas and Prairie View conferences, keynote speaker (and prolific home economics curriculum development author) Dr. Berenice Mallory discussed a need for homemaking teachers to work towards a better understanding of why the home economics discipline promoted certain curricular goals and how to accomplish said goals.

¹² TEA, *In-Service Training Conference (Dallas) for Homemaking Teachers: Homemaking Education in Today's World*, Bulletin 526, July 30- August 3, 1951 (Austin, TX: TEA, 1951), 2 (first quote); and TEA, *State Work Conference (Prairie View) - Homemaking Teachers: Homemaking Education For Today's Living*, Bulletin 529, August 26-29, 1951 (Austin, TX: TEA, 1951), "Introduction."

¹³ TEA, *State Conference (San Antonio)*, Bulletin 536, 7 (first quote); and TEA, *(Teachers Manual and Report) State Work Conference (Prairie View)*, Bulletin 538, 20 (second quote).

Many homemaking education goals deal with attitudes, beliefs and values. When we accept such goals as: 'Increased understanding and appreciation of the values of family life' and 'preservation of democratic values in family life,' we commit ourselves to trying to determine growth in aspects of behavior that are difficult to evaluate. But what we value, what we believe and how we feel are really the keys to our relations and to our conduct, and so we need to concern ourselves about the attitudes, values and beliefs of our pupils.

Mallory demonstrated a sincere commitment to democratic practices, including cultural diversity appreciation:

When teachers become concerned about the attitudes and beliefs of their pupils, they need to realize that attitudes and beliefs cannot be considered merely right or wrong, but that they get their meaning in terms of the individual and the situation. Also, as teachers explore student values, they may become concerned about values that are different from their own. Our democratic ideal commits us to respect individual values and so, teachers are obligated not to thrust their own values on a student. It is hard not to do this, for our values are important to us and we tend to think they would be important for other, too.

Mallory's sentiments in her keynote speech at the 1953 conferences reflected the pedagogical direction home economics moved in early Cold War years – teach democracy in a democratic manner.¹⁴

In addition to the state conferences, Texas's State Department of Education issued annual homemaking curriculum guidelines to high school homemaking teachers to reiterate ideas and issues discussed at the conferences. During the 1950s, the guidelines illustrated the evaluation of home economists' hybrid pedagogical strategy to cultivate good, democratic citizens. The 1950 guideline articulated the value of hands-

¹⁴ TEA, *In-Service Education Conference for Homemaking Teachers (Dallas): A Family-Centered Homemaking Program in Action-Criteria and Evidence, How Family Centered is the Homemaking Program Where You Teach?*, Bulletin 551, August 10-14, 1953 (Austin, TX: TEA, 1953), 17-18, 18 (first quote); and TEA, *In-Service Education Conference for Homemaking Teachers (Prairie View): Focusing the Homemaking Education Curriculum on the Whole Family*, Bulletin 543, August 17-21, 1953 (Austin, TX: TEA, 1953), 23-24, 24 (second quote).

on learning for producing proper democratic citizens, “[Desired behaviors] represent the composite thinking of the student, teacher, and parents about socially accepted behaviors for a particular situation...The [learning] experience which focuses attention on the most important of the desired behavior, is realistic and practical from the standpoint of time, money, energy and facilities. The student has the opportunity to select from a wide variety of choices, taking into consideration previous experiences. Provision is made also for learning in a variety of ways: discussing, reading, doing, seeing, feeling – to take care of individual differences.”¹⁵

The following year family living began to be synonymous with democratic living:

As a program becomes family centered it also becomes citizenship centered. With increasing ability to solve problems within the family group, members are more able to make adjustments as citizens and contribute toward a better world. Since the family reflects whatever happens in our society, it becomes increasingly important that we keep before us the problems of society and how we may improve its status...

Families of the greatest and most powerful democracy on earth are of utmost importance. It is in families that qualities of leadership are built. It is in families that physical well-being and mental health are determined. It is in families that we train for democratic living under democratic ideals and values. It is in families that we practice creative sharing and cooperative living. It is in families that we develop self-discipline and the ability to assume responsibility, the core of democratic action. Democracy is a way of life for each family as well as a form of government for the nation's people.

As family living became the focus of homemaking programs teachers accommodated their teaching method accordingly.¹⁶

¹⁵ TEA, *Bases for Developing Homemaking Education Curriculum*, (Austin, TX: TEA, 1950), 5 (quote).

¹⁶ TEA, *Suggested Guide: Homemaking Education: in Texas*, (Austin, TX: TEA, 1951), Foreword, 1 (quote).

By 1954 home economics leaders in Texas committed fully to adapting the curriculum to the changing social conditions. “Changing conditions in the home and in patterns of family living resulting from technological developments and social conditions make necessary the constant reconstruction of the homemaking curriculum.” The 1957 guideline repeated the sentiments of homemaking during the early years of the fifties. “The basic goal of homemaking education is to help the individual to live a useful and satisfying personal, family and community life.” The curriculum guidelines consistently restated the curricular goals expressed at the conferences – teach democracy democratically.¹⁷

Texas home economics leaders left no stone unturned. After organizers closed the doors to the conferences and distributed the conference reports and curriculum guidelines, they began work on the “Idea Exchange for Homemaking Teachers” pamphlets. These pamphlets were yet another method to inform high school homemaking teachers of the latest pedagogical advancements. The pamphlets recorded the activities of various programs throughout the state and TEA circulated them on a quarterly basis. The pamphlet distributed in October of 1951 stated that the homemaking professionals in Texas continued to “check our practices against the belief that only as families practice democracy and as the profession of home economics itself practices democracy, can we expect to have people who can be successful citizens. Sequential pamphlets demonstrated how homemaking programs throughout the state

¹⁷ TEA, *A Tentative Working Guide for Developing Homemaking Education Curriculum in Local Communities*, (Austin, TX: TEA, 1954), 1 (first quote); and TEA, *A Working Guide for Developing Homemaking Education Curriculum in Local Communities*, (Austin, TX: TEA, 1957), 1-2 (second quote).

paid heed to the pedagogical goals outlined in conference reports and curriculum guidelines.”¹⁸

¹⁸ TEA, *Home and Family Education: Idea Exchange for Homemaking Teachers - 'Homemaking Education in Today's World – Facing a Challenge, Meeting a Challenge,' Plan of Action - 1951-1952*, (Austin, TX: TEA, 1951), 2 (quote).

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This essay explored the Americanization efforts of educational leaders in Texas during the Progressive Era to demonstrate that reformers did not use vocational education, and specifically home economics, primarily to Americanize immigrant and ethnic minority students to become good, working-poor citizens. Through Americanization efforts in vocational curriculum, reformers hoped to provide economically disadvantaged students with a practical body of knowledge and democratic values that would create healthy, economically viable communities occupied by loyal, educated American citizens. Supporters of Americanization and vocational education emphasized good hygiene for all citizens because they believed a successful society directly correlated with a healthy society.

Federal legislation that promoted the development of vocational education in the first half of the twentieth century demonstrates that this way of thinking reflected national rather than regional trends. During the Progressive Era, the federal government recognized the vital need and importance of vocational education in an industrializing world. It supported the development of vocational programs in high schools, higher learning institutions and trade schools with substantial amounts of funding for many decades. Yet, at no point did the federal government explicitly mention that educators use vocational programs exclusively for immigrant and ethnic minorities. The federal government intended vocational education as a means to prepare American citizens to

successfully compete in and capitalist, industrialized world. Texas educational leaders also perceived vocational programs as necessary if their state hoped to participate in viable economic industries.

At the turn of the twentieth century, state Progressive reformers worked to improve public education in Texas in an effort to provide better employment opportunities for the state's children and to attract new industries to the region. Reformers strove to improve the quality and quantity of teachers and schools in Texas, and they hoped to systemize the state's public educational institutions through a better organized bureaucracy. Reflecting national trends and recognizing the state's agricultural base, educational leaders emphasized the need to strengthen rural schools and to develop vocational education in agriculture, trade and industry, and home economics. By improving rural school districts, reformers hoped to improve the education for Texas children and, thus, hasten the state's economic progress.

Furthermore, Progressives believed that public schools should inculcate American democratic values in all students, thus they strongly pushed Americanization and citizenry classes in the state's mandated curricula for all elementary schools. At the high school level, vocational education continued teaching democratic values. Contrary to historical orthodoxy, educational leaders in the Progressive Era did not use vocational education primarily to track immigrants and ethnic minorities into manual labor, nor did they use vocational education curricula as a vehicle to Americanize only immigrant and ethnic minority students. In Texas, the impulse towards vocational education and Americanization was largely directed at predominately white, rural areas. That decision

by educators casts considerable doubt on assertions that they were primarily motivated by racialized thinking. Reformers, however, believed that the welfare of a democratic society depended on the proper education of all its citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or class.

Texas's State Board of Education welcomed Americanization as a pedagogical approach for all its students and used homemaking, to help teach "right living" at the high school level. Throughout early decades of the twentieth century architects of the homemaking curriculum came to favor a Progressive, skills-oriented approach. This method instilled an explicit understanding of democratic values and an implicit understanding of the codes power through Americanization during the Progressive Era. Home economics curricula facilitated the ideology of a democratic, family-and community-centered life. Curricular goals emphasized that useful citizens were efficient, resourceful, thrifty, understanding (emotionally and culturally), adaptable, well-adjusted, social, creative, health and sanitation conscious, visually pleasing (home and self) and problem solvers. Additionally, a good citizen appreciated and understood the value of working, volunteering and contributing to the wellness of their family and community. Homemaking trained individuals to be productive and cooperative citizens in a democratic society and to understand themselves as members of their families and communities. Thus, home economists advocated a definition of citizenship predicated on families and communities, rather than individuals, being the most important elements in society.

Superimposing the goals of home economics over those of Americanization reveals remarkable similarities. Home economists, like other vocational education leaders, openly embraced Americanization as a pedagogical method. Knowing Progressive reformers actively Americanized all students, using various subjects, regardless of race or ethnicity, on the other hand, casts the curricular goals of homemaking in a new light. Home economists did not intend to “white wash” immigrant or ethnic minority students, nor did they desire to keep them on the lower rungs of society. On the contrary, promoters of vocational education generally hoped to “uplift” society by aiding those who occupied the lowest rungs of society. In Texas, these people were rural, uneducated, and predominately white. By Americanizing these students, reformers hoped to provide them with the knowledge (codes of power) necessary to become successful in American society, to have access, in short, to the “American Dream.” Regardless of the American Dream’s validity, Progressive reformers, including home economists, believed it to be a truth and acted accordingly.

The homemaking program at the South San Antonio high school in the 1944-1945 school year provides a case study for this argument. Progressive philosophy adopted by homemaking teachers during that time led them to advocate Americanization, and Nell Kruger’s case demonstrates that definitions of Americanization were less “subtractive” and more “additive.” In the 1940s South San Antonio’s community encompassed a mingling of various cultures produced from an influx of Mexican and European immigrants, and white military personnel. Nell Kruger, a white homemaking teacher at the high school, epitomized the home economics ethos

and hoped to provide her ethnically diverse class with the life skills necessary to succeed in American society. More importantly, however, Kruger's pedagogical methods demonstrate that she did not train Mexican girls for domestic work. On the contrary, Kruger hoped to develop an appreciation for the Mexican culture in all her students, especially the Mexican students.

It is the hope that this essay further nuanced the understanding of Americanization efforts through vocational education, specifically homemaking, during the Progressive Era in Texas by arguing that Americanization reflected an urban, middle-class perspective directed toward economically disadvantaged white students as well as immigrant and ethnic minority students.

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